Westminster & Pimlico News

Established 1857, part of the London Weekly News group | FREE | Tuesday, March 29th 2016

Stones make an exhibition of themselves

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Cash plea for soccer campaign to combat terrorists

BY GEOFF BAKER
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THE founder of west London's football scheme to save young people from radicalisation has slammed the authorities for not providing the funding he says is urgently needed to stop "a time bomb of suicide attacks which is ticking in our midst".

Dr Shamender Talwar is warning of "a catastrophe" of Muslim youth suicide bomb attacks in London unless there is official financial backing for the Kensington-based TUFF FC scheme, which turns young people targeted by ISIS away from jihadism by converting them to the British team spirit of playing football instead.

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■ ON THE BALL: How the TUFF FC Football for Unity initiative was launched last year in Westminster Picture: Richard Austin

Plan for cleaner air

AIR pollution is the most important environmental issue to Londoners – and is becoming a key election issue as the mayoral race gathers pace.

Recent polling showed that London parents see air pollution as the biggest health risk facing them, with 68 per cent of parents saying they are worried about their children breathing in dirty air. A new masterplan to tackle pollution in London has just been published

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Terror plotters in court

TERRORIST conspirators have been convicted after plotting a 'drive-by' attack on the streets of west London.

Tarik Hassane and Suhaib Majeed were convicted of conspiring to commit a terrorist murder, while two other men pleaded guilty to firearms offences.

Counter terrorism investigators foiled the plot after internet records showed that the men were targeting Shepherd's Bush police station and the Parachute Regiment Territorial Army Centre in White City.

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Tribute to poet

DENZIL Dunnett CMG OBE, the popular west London modernist poet and former diplomat, has died at the age of 99.

His architect son, James, has paid tribute to his father, who was born at Sirsa in the Punjab in 1917 as the third son of Sir James Macdonald Dunnett.

He spent most of the war serving in India and Ceylon attached to Louis Mountbatten's South East Asia Command.

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Busking: why London is streets ahead

FIFTY cities across the UK, along with major world cities including New York, Sydney, Barcelona, Hong Kong, Paris and Toronto, will join London for the most ambitious celebrations of busking and street performance ever staged.

The first ever International Busking Day will take place on Saturday, July 23, with each city hosting music, circus, magic, street dance, physical theatre, street art and other entertainment in public spaces ranging from city squares to underground and railway stations and shopping malls to parks.

It comes as busking musicians and street performers continue to face obstacles in many cities thanks to confusing rules, unnecessary red tape and even the threat of arrest – despite it being popular with residents and tourists alike. The London 2012 Festival and subsequent events like Lumiere London have also demonstrated a massive appetite for outdoors arts and performance.

International Busking Day will seek to counter misconceptions, raising the profile of street performance on an international level and highlighting its significance in the life of cities.

FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

This global showcase of exciting talent builds on the success of the Mayor's Busk in London programme and the Gigs busking competition. Over the last eight years, Gigs has attracted thousands of young musicians and been enjoyed by millions at Tube stations and other locations across the capital.

Mayor Boris Johnson said: "We are thrilled that great world cities have rallied to our call for the first ever International Busking Day. As a global hub for creativity and the arts, I'm proud that London is spearheading this celebration of street performance. I hope all cities will recognise the huge cultural contribution buskers make, and follow London's lead in making it easier for performers to do their thing!"

Musician Hugh Cornwell, one of the founders of The Stranglers, said: "It's great to hear that there will now be an official Busk in London busking circuit in London's major train stations – another world first for London. It's a great opportunity for the capital's young talent to show their wares and take on the challenge of an audience on the move."

Kyle Falconer, from indie rock band The View, who found success through busking said: "We're happy to support International Busking Day. Busking was essential for us as performers when we started our career, it's partly how we learned to craft our art and gives artists the opportunity to play to new audiences and a platform to be recognised.

"Our debut album was titled *Hats Off To The Buskers* and so it's very apt that we can be part of this scheme to enable busking in various cities worldwide and to encourage new talent to get involved and be heard."

Chart-topping singer-songwriter Jack Savoretti said: "Having toured Europe a lot these last couple of years, one thing I always recognise and say about the UK music scene is that, like no other place it gives new, up and coming artists a platform. That starts with busking and playing in small venues. Busk in London goes right to the heart of this and will continue to make this a unique music city."

Richie from CC Smugglers, a band spotted busking by Jools Holland, who will be performing at a festival being headlined by Bruce Springsteen this summer, said: "The sidewalk is the great equaliser; it separates the wheat from the chaff. The tricks you learn on the streets, you will take with you for the rest of your career. 'Get it right out there, and you'll have no problem in the bars, theatres and big stages' – the words of Old Crow Medicine Show front-man and personal hero, Ketch Secor and spoken to us as he discovered us busking outside his show, he in turn was discovered busking by his hero Doc Watson on a Nashville street corner.

"It's a tradition that we are proud to not only have been a part of, but eager to encourage and support. We are keen to make it our mission to help ensure this longstanding craft is not bustled out of our cities by bureaucracy and licensing."

Professor Richard Smith, University of Southern California Thornton School of Music, who is coordinating activities in Los Angeles, said: "So much incredible talent is honed on the streets.

"It's an equal playing field and gives us all access to a rich mix of culture. International Busking Day is a world-wide celebration of this and LA is excited to be involved."

Trafalgar Square will once again be at the heart of the action following the success of last year's National Busking Day, which saw 22 cities, including London take part. The Busk in London Festival will be returning with street performance over nine days from July 23-31, with the square hosting performers from around the world.

This year, for the first time, it will include performance masterclasses and Give it a Go sessions as part of the brand new Busk in London Academy in partnership with Morley College London.

CMN

Part of Capital Media Newspapers Limited

The London Weekly News Group
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(Established 1857)
Kensington & Chelsea News
(Established 1857 & 1869)
Fulham Chronicle
(Established 1888)
Hammersmith Chronicle
(Established 2015)
Shepherd's Bush Chronicle
(Established 2015)
London Weekly News
(Established 2014)

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■ DIRTY OLD TOWN: Pollution continues to be a threat to the health of Londoners – but think tank Policy Exchange recommends a 10-point course of remedial action

Masterplan to combat menace of pollution

Air pollution is the most important environmental issue to Londoners – and is becoming a key election issue as the mayoral race gathers pace. Recent polling showed that London parents see air pollution as the biggest health risk facing them, with 68 per cent of parents saying they are worried about their children breathing in dirty air. A new masterplan to tackle pollution in London has just been published...

OVER the past year the influential think tank Policy Exchange has been working with air quality scientists at King's College London to identify solutions to the city's air pollution crisis.

Its first report, *Up in the Air: Part 1*, released in December, identified that more than 12 per cent of London's total area exceeded legal and healthy limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO2) in 2010 – an area which contained a workplace population of 3.8 million people, as well as 979 schools attended by a quarter of London's school population.

Exposure to NO2 pollution can cause irritation of the lungs and increases the chance of respiratory infections. It is estimated that if air pollution stays at current levels it could reduce the life expectancy of the average Londoner born in 2010 by up to two years.

Now, Policy Exchange has released a follow up report, *Up in the Air: Part 2*, which proposes a comprehensive package of measures to clean up London's air. The report highlights that air pollution is overwhelmingly a diesel problem.

The UK has undergone a substantial shift towards diesels over the last 15 years on the basis they have lower greenhouse gas emissions.

However, says Policy Exchange, more recent evidence has shown that diesel vehicles emit far more local pollution than petrol vehicles. Car manufacturers have systematically failed to deliver sufficient improvements in NOx emissions, despite the introduction of progressively tighter emissions standards.

Policy Exchange said: "Therefore, one of the first recommendations in our report is for emissions standards to be tightened in the future. In addition, we propose that fiscal incentives need to be changed in order to discourage the purchase of new diesels in favour of alternatives such as petrol hybrids or electric vehicles. Alongside this we propose a scrappage scheme to take older diesel cars and vans off the road altogether.

"In addition to these large scale measures, we also propose a series of policies to restrict the most polluting vehicles from London and to promote alternatives. We propose that the emission standards in the existing Low Emission Zone and proposed Ultra Low Emission Zone need to be tightened.

"Alongside this, Transport for London must invest to upgrade the bus fleet in London, and work with the taxi trade to clean up taxis and minicabs. Our report also identifies gas combustion as another significant source of air pollution. We propose a boiler scrappage scheme to remove the oldest and most polluting boilers and changes to planning policies and national energy policies to prevent gas, diesel and biomass engines from being built in London."

Overall, modelling by King's College London suggests that these proposals could lead to compliance with air quality limits across 99.9 per cent of London's area by 2025.

Policy Exchange has made a number of recommendations to address the final 0.1 per cent –- such as creating "clean bus corridors" and adopting smarter approaches to freight. It is estimated that these policies could lead to an increase in average life expectancy of over one month across all Londoners born in 2025, and economic benefits valued at £600 million per year.

Policy Exchange's 10-point plan

1 Deliver a more ambitious Air Quality Strategy. Current and planned policies will not deliver compliance with air quality limits in London until at least 2030. Further action is required to clean up London's air, and the Mayor of London will need to play a strong leadership role on this issue to accelerate change. Tackling air pollution will require a combination of policies at London, UK and European level.

2 Restrict the most polluting vehicles from entering London. The emissions standards in the existing Low Emission Zone and planned Ultra Low Emission Zone need to be tightened in the future in order to restrict the most polluting vehicles. We propose tighter standards for buses, coaches and HGVs in the London-wide Low Emission Zone by no later than 2023, and tighter standards for diesel cars in the Ultra Low Emission Zone by 2025.

3 Clean up the taxi fleet. In the long term London is moving towards"Zero Emission Capable" taxis and minicabs, but in the meantime the mayor should focus on cleaning up the existing fleet. We propose that all pre-Euro 6 taxis should be retired from the fleet by 2025, and alongside this TfL should encourage the retrofit or conversion of taxis to LPG. The mayor must also take immediate action to prevent pre-Euro 6 cars from registering as minicabs.

4 Clean up the bus fleet. Transport for London needs to complete the rollout of low emission buses across London. We propose that all buses should be a minimum of Euro VI by 2020 in Central London and across the whole of London by no later than 2023. The most polluted roads such as Oxford Street should be declared 'clean bus corridors', using only the cleanest buses available and rerouting some services.

5 Promote electric vehicles and car clubs. London is leading the way in the use of electric vehicles, but the number of electric vehicles and charging points is still relatively low. The Mayor of London should encourage the use of electric vehicles and car clubs. This will require the roll-out of a competitive pan-London electric charging network.

6 Push for tighter emissions standards for new diesels. The primary cause of the air pollution crisis is the failure of emission standards for diesel vehicles. Current diesel car standards simply do not go far enough and need to be tightened further, based on real-world emissions tests.

7 Back calls for an increase in taxes on new diesel cars. Fiscal incentives such as Vehicle Excise Duty (road tax) and Company Car Tax have driven the uptake of diesels over the last 15 years. These tax advantages need to be removed to reflect the local pollution associated with diesels. These policy changes need to be designed carefully to influence new purchases without penalising existing diesel drivers.

8 Back calls for a diesel scrappage scheme. The mayor should support calls for a national diesel scrappage scheme which provides grants to take older diesel cars and vans off the road and replace them with lower emission vehicles (eg petrol, hybrids, electric, LPG).

9 Prevent polluting generators from being built in London. There is a risk that the growth of decentralised power stations, such as diesel, gas and biomass engines, could undermine efforts to improve air quality in London. The Mayor must ensure that there are adequate safeguards in place to prevent inappropriate developments, and work with central government to ensure energy policies do not create air quality issues in London.

10 Tackle emissions from gas boilers. Gas combustion is the second largest source of NOx emission after road transport. Creating a boiler cashback scheme is a cost effective was to drive the replacement of old polluting boilers.

Youth MP roles for Hamza and Nishat

HAMZA Taouzzale, aged 16, from Church Street, was announced as the new Youth MP for Westminster and Nishat Uddin, 16, from Maida Vale, was announced as the Deputy Youth MP, at an event hosted by the Lord Mayor of Westminster earlier this month.

The Westminster Youth Elections saw more 55 per cent of young people (7,000 votes) in Westminster have their say and turn out to vote.

This year four young candidates campaigned across schools and youth groups, talking about issues such as combatting community crime and the chance for all young people to achieve what they want to.

Hamza and Nishat will now act as the voice of young people, and will work directly with key decision makers to help influence and shape local services for young people.

Hamza, from King Solomon Academy, said on his election: "I am so pleased that I have been given such a great opportunity to actually make a change in my community. It is amazing to be given such a chance to help those who helped me and help those who need it most. With this opportunity I will do all I can to make changes for the better.

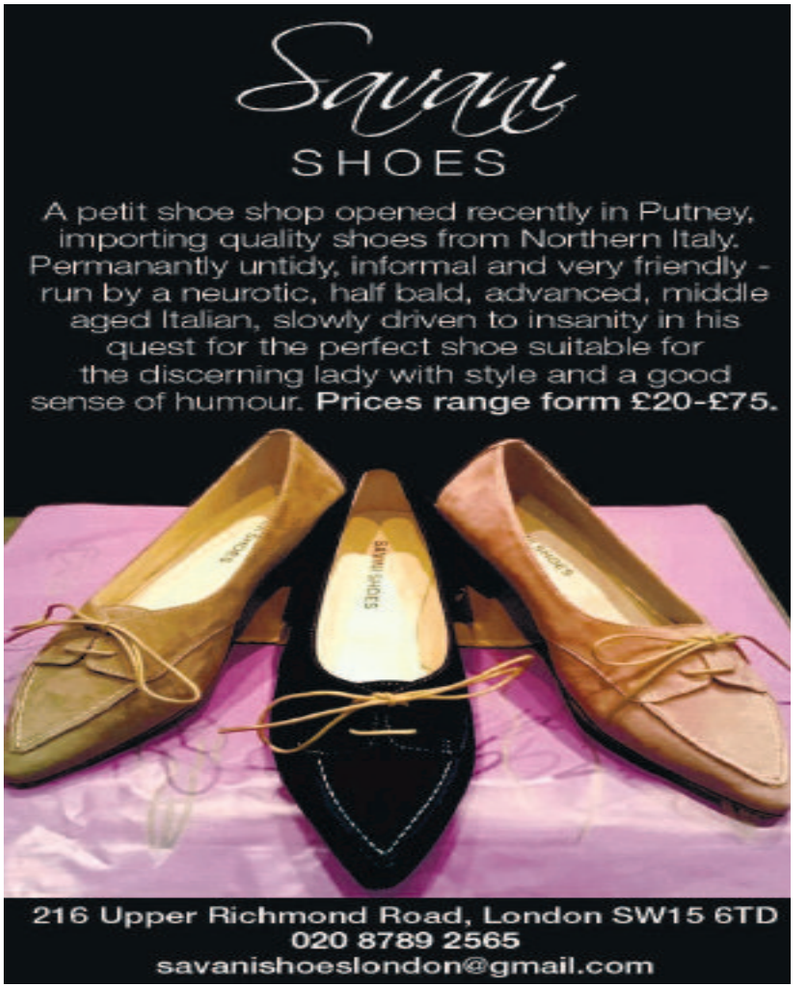
■ YOUTH VOICE: Hamza Taouzzale and Nishat Uddin

"The reason I decided to stand as Youth MP is because I saw lots of things in our community which need to be changed and need to be made better for the greater good.

"I felt annoyed that young people were being ignored and constantly forgotten so I stood as candidate because I felt I could see what is wrong and with the help of those young people I can truly make a difference."

Councillor Danny Chalkley, Westminster City Council's cabinet member for children and young people said: "Congratulations to Hamza and Nishat on their election victories. The Youth MP and Deputy Youth MP play a vital role in ensuring that we hear the voice of young people in Westminster. I look forward to meeting them both in the near future and hearing their shared visions for improving the lives of young people in the coming year."

Hamza and Nishat take over the positions from Aby Murray and Enkuush Mergen, who have been the Youth MP and Deputy Youth MP for the last year.



■ PRIDE OF PLACE: Alfie Heaney-McKinnell, above left, took part in the annual Commonwealth Service

Alfie enjoys royal appointment

WESTMINSTER'S Portland Place pupil Alfie Heaney-McKinnell was selected to take part in the annual Commonwealth Service with the Queen which took place on March 14.

The service was held at Westminster Abbey and was a celebration of the Commonwealth with a theme of "An Inclusive Commonwealth".

A select group of dignitaries, school children and youth groups were invited to the event, which focused on the diversity of the community – and Alfie was chosen to go along with three others from his Scout Troop, the KX (Kings Cross) Explorer Scout Unit.

Alfie, who is 15 and from Holborn, said: "Portland Place was so supportive, allowing me to have the afternoon off school as they identified this as an incredible experience for me. I really wanted to see all the high profile people come together for a celebratory event, it was inspirational.

"It was such a fantastic opportunity, I didn't want to miss. We were able to go on a tour of Westminster Abbey which was very interesting. Our position was great, we were so close to the Queen and other important people such as the Prime Minister of Malta. Ellie Goulding also performed which was brilliant."

Headmaster at Portland Place School, David Hyman said: "This was one of those opportunities that an intelligent young man such as Alfie should not miss. He would have gained a lot from it as he understands the importance of community and is often heavily involved in local events."

Alfie recently attended the opening of parliament with the Explorers. There he welcomed the ambassadors, opened their car doors and escorted them inside. He was then able to sit in on a debate and said: "It was great to see how the commons works."

He was also presented with a Jack Petchey award by the mayor of Camden and Lieutenant Colonel Roderick E F Morriss TD DL, the Queen's representative for Hackney last year for achieving his Chief Scouts Gold Award, the highest award in the Scout section.

Portland Place School is a leading independent co-educational school for children aged nine to 18, located directly in the heart of the City of Westminster. From September 2016, Portland Place will be expanding into Year Four.

For more information on the school visit: *www.portlandplace.co.uk* or call 020 7307 8700.

'Outstanding' recognition for borough's children's services

WESTMINSTER City Council, which shares responsibility for children's cervices through a tri-borough agreement with Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham councils, has been awarded an outstanding rating from Ofsted – the first in the country to do so under the current system – following an inspection earlier this year.

Children's services in Westminster are made up of "well-trained and impressive social workers" who are "patient, tenacious and respectful" and make a "vast difference" in keeping children safe from harm, finds the report. The council is a "highly ambitious corporate parent" and looked after children in Westminster see "exceptionally good outcomes".

Councillor Danny Chalkley, cabinet member for children and young people said: "I am delighted to see the staff who work so tirelessly to protect Westminster's children being recognised for their care, compassion and dedication.

"Westminster City Council has always strived for excellence and nowhere is this more important than in the work we do to keep the city's most vulnerable young people safe. I'm also particularly proud to see the work we do to support children who are unable to live with their families resulting in such positive outcomes."

The report also highlights that significant and sustained improvements have been made since the last inspection in October 2011, when services were judged to be good.

The local authorities leaders and managers demonstrating "a strong track record of effective, high-quality service delivery... linked "regularly and directly to the tri-borough Executive Director of Children's Services, who manages the complex arrangement exceptionally well, within a mature culture of appropriate challenge."

Andrew Christie, Executive Director of Children's Services commented: "I am immensely proud of today's Ofsted rating which is a direct result of the hard work that all our staff put in, often in extremely difficult circumstances.

"There is no room for complacency, however, and we will continue to look at areas where we can improve so that services for children and families in Westminster remain best in class."

The council currently looks after 179 children and Ofsted found that they had "enduring relationships with committed, skilled and determined social workers", resulting in children and young people doing well in education and feeling stable and safe.

Adoption services in particular were found to be outstanding.

The report further highlighted the exemplary work Children's Services carries out to protect those at risk of child sexual exploitation, as well as the "excellent initiatives" to protect children and young people from radicalisation, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and honour-based violence.

The council's FGM pilot that brings together specialist social workers and midwives to identify pregnant women who have undergone FGM and protect their daughters from being cut was recently hailed as a "ground-breaking initiative" by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson.

Westminster was rated outstanding for: looked after children, adoption, and leadership and governance; leading to an overall rating of outstanding.

‘Act now on scheme to beat terror’

BY GEOFF BAKER
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THE founder of West London’s football-based scheme which saves young people from ISIS radicalisation has slammed the authorities for not providing funding which is now urgently needed to stop “a time bomb of suicide attacks which is ticking in our midst”.

Dr Shamender Talwar is warning of “a catastrophe” of Muslim youth suicide bomb attacks in London unless there is official financial backing for the Kensington-based TUFF FC scheme, which turns young people targeted by ISIS away from jihadism by converting them to the British team spirit of playing football instead.

In the last year TUFF has saved 33 young Londoners who were being targeted by ISIS. But Dr Talwar warns there are many more now at risk and the risk is becoming a crisis.

Initially TUFF FC, The Unity of Faiths Foundation football project to support youth from different religious and cultural backgrounds, was set up to dissuade Muslim teenagers from travelling to fight with ISIS in Syria – but now Dr Talwar has raised the alarm that the new threat is here, on home turf.

He said: “Muslim kids are being time-bombed in London and all over the UK. I’m not just talking about them getting radicalised to go to Syria, I’m talking about them now becoming suicide bombers right here in this city. Some of these kids are so anti-British. My god, you would not believe the extent of the hatred that has been put into them. They are saying ‘what’s the point of living in the UK, what’s the point of living?’ The Government doesn’t seem to realise that these kids are time bombs ticking in our midst. It’s not about them going to Syria anymore, the time bomb is here and we have big work to do. It’s going to turn nasty and we’re saying before it turns nasty let’s turn these kids around.”

■ **FOUNDER: Dr Shamender Talwar created TUFF FC**

The Football For Unity scheme works by countering ISIS online efforts to recruit Muslim teenagers with propaganda claiming that Islamist faith is more important than nationality. Dr Talwar’s project teaches the teenagers that their identity is British, whatever their religion or beliefs.

“What can be more British than football? We use it to teach teamwork, fair play and respect for the rules. It’s about inculcating youngsters with what we consider are core British values and reinforcing that while their religion may be Muslim, their identity is British,” said Dr Talwar.

Downing Street, the FA and Muslim leaders across London have all expressed support for the Football For Unity project, which provides football training and team building on practice grounds in Southall.

But none of the authorities have yet given any financial backing for the scheme that Dr Talwar says now urgently needs to be rolled out all across London and the UK in order to prevent suicide attacks like those seen in Belgium last week.

“The power of football has already stopped these children going to Syria but we need to do much more to prevent a catastrophe happening here in London,” said Dr Talwar, the West London social psychologist who has been funding the TUFF scheme with co-founder Anna Prior, a former Mayfair art dealer.

“I’ve talked to Downing Street, I’ve talked to Muslim leaders and the FA and they all say how much they support our scheme, but it’s all just talk. They are being sleepy-heads about the great danger we are facing. We need funding now to get the TUFF scheme going on every estate in London. This scheme works, it is solution that can stop these kids getting radicalised.

“The kids are not a threat in themselves, they are just kids, but they are vulnerable. Young minds are a sponge, but if you fill that sponge with a good attitude, as TUFF does, you get good results.”

Dr Talwar estimates that it would take £30,000 per project to establish the TUFF FC template in boroughs across London and in the major cities of the UK which are at risk of young people turning to jihadism.

“The Government needs to fund this now, before it is too late. We’re not asking any longer, we’re saying ‘bloody well do it now or you will have a catastrophe’”, he said. “The Government says it hasn’t forgotten us but it is busy with Brexit, but you won’t have a Brexit, you won’t have a Europe to exit if this threat blows up.

“The Government has spent £84 million on its Prevent strategy to protect children from radicalisation but that hasn’t worked with one child. Children aren’t going to talk to a police officer or a teacher about something that they are too scared to even talk to their parents about.

“The s*** is going to hit the fan unless we act. If there is a catastrophe then they will say ‘let’s get in Football For Unity’, but we don’t want to wait until there are dead bodies in the street. We already have the antidote to the ISIS threat to radicalise our kids, let’s use it.

“It’s not just London kids that are at risk. I’ve been visiting cities all over the UK and I’ve seen the same anti-British hatred in Bradford, Birmingham, Bristol, Ipswich, Newcastle, Glasgow and Liverpool. Liverpool has a massive problem with the radicalisation, as does Glasgow. I reckon there are 20 to 30 cities across the UK that should be adopting our scheme.”

For more details on TUFF FC, go to *www.footballforunity.org*

YOUNGSTERS FLY THE FLAG OF DEFIANCE

YOUNG footballers from North Kensington will travel to the terror cell capital of Europe next month in order to show Belgian youth at risk of becoming ISIS jihadists how to turn to soccer instead.

Kensington players will be among the TUFF FC team who are going to Molenbeek to stage a Football Against Jihad match in the town that has become the No 1 centre for grooming terrorists in Europe.

TUFF FC, the soccer scheme set up by Kensington-based The Unity of Faiths Foundation, has saved 33 young Londoners from ISIS attempts to turn them into jihadists by instead encouraging them to join the football teams that train three time a week in Southall.

Now the West London players are to play at match against a Molenbeek youth side to launch the roll-out of the TUFF scheme in the extremist hotspot which was a base for ISIS terrorists responsible for the atrocities in Brussels last week and the attacks on Paris.

Young Muslims in London and across the UK and Europe are increasingly at risk to ISIS attempts to recruit them online by trying to persuade them that their nationality is secondary to an extreme Islamist version of their faith.

But the Kensington-based TUFF FC scheme counters the ISIS propaganda by encouraging young people’s belief in their British identity, whatever their religion.

“There is nothing more British than football and we use it to teach teamwork, fair play and respect for the rules. It’s about inculcating youngsters with core British values and reinforcing that while their religion may be Muslim, their identity is British,” said the football project’s founder Dr Shamender Talwar.

“The same argument applies in Belgium, it is about bolstering the feeling of national identity and values. Clearly Belgium now has a big problem and we are going there to play this match because football is the solution to the problem.”

The TUFF FC players are being taken to Molenbeek by London MEP Syed Kamall, who will also be introducing the team and organisers to EU leaders with the aim of establishing similar football schemes in other countries across Europe where young people are at risk of jihadist brainwashing.

“This is an amazing initiative,” said Mr Kamall, “Clearly something right is being done here to combat radicalism and we must make sure that its success is repeated elsewhere.”

TUFF FC has also been approached by President Obama, who wants the players to visit him at the White House so that he can hear first-hand of how to launch a similar scheme across the USA.

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LONDON WIDE

■ WHERE IT'S AT: Sing London, the people who brought pianos, ping pong and Talking Statues to the streets of London, this week staged Search Party – the flagship event of the Mayor of London's Find your London Festival. Search Party, on March 20, was a treasure hunt in search of a secret party with four routes, 4,000 free tickets and one secret party – if participants could find it. The party featured afternoon tea, swing dancing, music and an array of surprises. 'Search Party helps people to look at London's open spaces in new ways,' says Colette Hiller of Sing London. Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: 'My new festival celebrates our city's great outdoor space from our much loved woods and parks, to our bustling high streets and town centres.' Find Your London was the Mayor of London's final jamboree. It ran from March 18 to 28 and featured everything from beekeeping to photography to an Alice in Wonderland tea party. The festival aimed to get Londoners out and about exploring more of their city. Pictured are supporters of the Sing London initiative ahead of the event

Poetry inspired by keen eye of skilled journalist and diplomat

DENZIL Dunnett CMG OBE, the popular Kensington modernist poet and former diplomat, has died at the age of 99. Here, his architect son James pays tribute

FEW make a living from poetry – even TS Eliot was a banker, then a publisher, and Chaucer was a customs officer and diplomat.

Diplomacy was also the principal calling of my father Denzil Dunnett, after seven years in the Army and two as journalist on *The Scotsman* – roles he took seriously enough – but always there was poetry.

He was born at Sirsa in the Punjab in 1917 as the third son of Sir James Macdonald Dunnett, an Indian Civil Servant and subsequently a leading member of the Viceroy's Cabinet, and scion of a whole family of Ministers of the Church of Scotland.

At the age of five Denzil was sent home to be brought up (as was the custom) by two maiden aunts in Edinburgh. From Edinburgh Academy he went up to read classics and philosophy at Oxford in 1935.

His first poems were published in Nevil Coghill's *New Oxford Poetry* in 1937 and he became editor of the poetry magazine *Programme* and chairman of the English Club. Through this connection he got to know many of the leading poets of the time, publishing for the first time poems of Dylan Thomas for example, and became one of the first activists in the group Mass Observation founded by anthropologist Tom Harrison and poet Charles Madge.

They wrote detailed observations of public reactions to key events of the time, such as the burning of the Crystal Palace and the abdication of Edward VIII, interpreting them with a Surrealist flavour. As the only Scot, Denzil 'observed' the parliamentary by-election contested unsuccessfully in 1938 by the Duchess of Atholl on her home turf as an independent opposed to appeasement and non-intervention in Spain.

He had spent the summer of 1936 in Berlin at the time of Hitler's Olympics, which he did not attend. He participated in Mass Observation's celebrated study of 'Worktown' – Bolton – with Humphrey Jennings, William Coldstream, Humphrey Spender and others in 1937-8.

Denzil matriculated with a 'double first' in 1939 and was immediately called up into the army. While training in Lancashire he met a local art teacher, Ruth Rawcliffe, some years his senior, whom he was to marry after the war. Most of the war he spent in India and Ceylon attached to Louis Mountbatten's South East Asia Command, and subsequently in Germany – apparently dry years from a poetic point of view.

Married in 1946 while still in uniform, he remained in touch with his Oxford friend Denis Healey and envisaged a career in politics, for which he prepared by starting as a journalist on *The Scotsman*.

He reviewed for the paper much of the first Edinburgh Festival in 1947. But now with a young family he decided on a more secure and better paid career in the Foreign Office. His early colleagues there included Guy Burgess, the notorious spy, and Robert Conquest, the poet/historian and latterly scourge of communism, whom he had known at Oxford.

Postings followed to Bulgaria, New York, Paris, Buenos Aires, the Congo, Spain, London, Mexico, and Senegal (where he was widowed). The most dramatic was as British consul in the secessionist Congolese province of Katanga in 1960-2 at the time of active United Nations military operations there under Conor Cruise O'Brien.

The two were able to establish a rapport based on shared literary interests, but Denzil later countered O'Brien's apologia *To Katanga and Back* with his own *To Katanga and On*. He was waiting on the tarmac when Hammarskjold's plane failed to arrive. Some of these postings inspired poems – his poem *Reflections*, inspired by the Seine, was published in the *Saltire Review* in 1955 during his years in Paris.

In all of these postings my parents made contact with local artists and writers – for example they got to know Borges in Argentina.

Retiring from the Foreign Office in 1976, Denzil became for a few years the London representative of the Scottish Development Agency, described in *The Scotsman* as 'Scotland's man in London'.

He bought a cottage near his sister in East Lothian, an alternative base to his London home, and began more actively to resume his poetical career, winning a competition organised by the poet Steven Zivadin for poems employing the 'Anarhyme' – an example being Denzil's *Hymn to the Creator,* beginning 'Strict/Rector/Still create/ - What our sullen/Silence/Almost annuls – You large scheme/of cosmic/Music.'

To the non-specialist such as myself the inspiration of his early loves – such as Auden, Eliot, Spender and Gerald Manley Hopkins – also seems evident. His first collection – *Bird-Poems* – some of them almost sound-poems imitating birds – was published in 1989, with woodcut illustration by Hullmuth Weissenborn, friend of sound-poet Kurt Schwitters, who had also illustrated the world of Seamus Heaney. *The Weight of Shadows* – poems descriptive and religious followed, and *Wounds* in 2006, illustrated by Guy Heatherington, in which Denzil explains in the poem *Rain's Perfection, Main's Imperfection* that 'It is through wounds that we breath'. Contemporary prize-winning poet Robert Robinson wrote to me that 'I was very impressed by the originality and modernity of the poetry, which is full of striking memorable images'.

A collection mainly from the 1950s, *The Patterns of the Dark*, remains unpublished. Other activities in retirement included promoting anti-slavery (which he had observed in West Africa), chairmanship of the West London Chess Club and – an interest in politics re-emerging – standing (unsuccessfully) for election as a Lib-Dem councillor.

In 1983 he wrote a very scholarly paper published in *The Journal of International Affairs* attacking Thatcher's stance on the Falklands, called *Self-determination and the Falklands*.

The publisher's 'blurb' (author unknown) on the back of *Weight of Shadows* concludes: 'This is a beautiful collection from a poet who loves Scotland and its changing faces. Deeply influenced by the forms of architecture and geology around him, Denzil Dunnett forges links between the natural and the artificial worlds in a successful marriage of poetry and philosophy'.

Take a tilt at top tax rebate

KENSINGTON and Chelsea Council has launched a cashback prize draw aimed at persuading residents to pay their council tax, with a five-figure cheque for the lucky winner.

One resident could scoop £10,000 as the council has again joined with Bacs Payment Schemes Limited, the not-for-profit organisation behind Direct Debit in the UK, to offer council tax payers a chance to win the cash prize.

The Royal Borough is one of eight London boroughs taking part in the campaign, with those living in Barnet, Brent, City of Westminster, Islington, Lewisham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets also eligible for entry into the draw.

To be in with a chance of winning the £10,000 prize, Royal Borough residents must register to pay their council tax bill by Direct Debit before 5pm on Friday 15 July 2016, either by returning a completed Direct Debit instruction form by post, signing-up to Direct Debit online at the website *www.rbkc.gov.uk/counciltax* – or by calling 020 7361 3005 to arrange over the phone.

Residents who already pay their council tax by Direct Debit will automatically be entered into the prize draw. In 2013 North Kensington resident Salvatore Rullo scooped the top prize.

Holiday fun for children

HOLLAND Park Ecology Centre is offering an exciting range of events from today, Tuesday, March 29, to Friday, April 8 – all for youngsters interested in nature and arts and crafts.

On March 29 children can enjoy an Easter egg-stravaganza which includes following an Easter nature trail to learn about animal eggs and nests. The Egg-stravaganza runs from 11am to 3pm and costs £2 per child. There is no need to book, just drop-in.

From Wednesday, March 30 to Friday, April 8 there are opportunities to find out about amphibian antics, discover what makes peacocks proud and have 'tree-mendous' fun playing tree bingo and more besides. The sessions, aimed at five to ten-year olds, last for two hours and run from 10am to noon and 2pm to 4pm. Organisers say booking is essential and sessions cost £5 or £4.30 for concessions.

On April 8 there is a special night safari which will give children an opportunity to learn about the park's nocturnal creatures and seek them out with the help of bat detectors and torches.

To book a session call 020 7938 8186 or email *ecology.centre@rbkc.gov.uk* Children under eight must be accompanied by an adult. Find the full programme of events at *www.rbkc.gov.uk/ecology*

Top draw

PROMS on The Roof have announced dates for their third return to The Roof Gardens in Kensington. Tickets are £29.50, with a cocktail upon arrival. Food will also be available.

The dates for Proms on The Roof are: May 11, August 10, August 17 and August 24.

■ IMAGES OF WAR: Londoners are being urged not to miss the chance to explore the lives and roles of women during the Second World War through the lens of Lee Miller, one of the most war important photographers of the 20th century. This major exhibition at the Imperial War Museum examines the experiences of women in Britain and Europe during the 1939-45 conflict as well as society's perception of women's roles before, during and in the immediate aftermath of the war. Over 150 powerful images are on display alongside Picasso's portrait of Miller, personal correspondence with Vogue founder Condé Nast and many other objects never seen before. Here are two of Miller's photographs. Right: Anna Leska, Air Transport Auxilliary, Polish pilot flying a spitfire, White Waltham, Berkshire, 1942. Left: women wearing fire masks, Downshire Hill, London, 1941

New Diana memorial

A NEW garden is to be created to mark the 20th anniversary of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, Kensington Palace has said.

The Historic Royal Palaces charity said detailed plans are yet to be unveiled, but the memorial garden is due to be completed before the anniversary on August 31.

A spokeswoman is reported to have said: "Our plans are still at the earliest stages of development."

The Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry, are being informed regularly of the plans as they progress.

The garden would become the fourth London memorial dedicated to the Princess, joining the Diana Memorial Playground at Kensington Palace, the Diana Memorial Walk at St James' Palace and the Diana Memorial Fountain in Hyde Park.s

Muslim leaders unite to condemn terrorist outrage

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

LONDON'S Imams and mosque leaders of both Shia and Sunni denominations have condemned Daesh terrorists for the Brussels attacks and say the bombers "do not represent anyone except themselves".

One hundred Muslim leaders have put their names to a statement, praising the police and calling for all communities to stand together. They have ordered that the wave of terrorism must not cause division.

"Our deepest condolences are with the family and friends of the victims of the Brussels bombings and similar horrors unleashed on innocent people in Istanbul and Ankara last week," state the religious leaders.

"We are horrified by what has happened in recent weeks, and Britain's faith communities are united in condemnation against these appalling acts.

"The perpetrators do not represent anybody but themselves, and unfortunately events such as these often result in an increase in racial and religious hate crime. We urge all communities to stand firm with compassion and solidarity, and to not engage in hateful or divisive language. We must not let terrorists divide us.

"The police and security services do an incredible job working tirelessly to keep us safe. As members of Britain's faith communities we applaud that work, and call for fully engaged and integrated approach to tackling all forms of terrorism, violence and hatred."

The statement came after a group of scholars, Imams and mosque leaders of Shia and Sunni denominations returned from the first-ever fact-finding visit by British Muslim religious leaders. They travelled to Iraq to witness first-hand the front line efforts against Daesh.

Against the backdrop of the terrorist attacks in Brussels eight delegates from the Muslim community said they will take their learnings back to their respective communities. They explained they will use these to help "counter the myths and distorted perception of Islam, which extremists use as a way of creating tensions and recruiting followers".

One of the leaders of the Iraq expedition, Director of the Faiths Forum for London, Mustafa Field MBE, said: "I have just recently seen first-hand in Iraq the daily atrocities caused by Daesh. Although they are losing ground in Iraq, they continue to spread deception and lies designed to destabilise societies.

"We must all come together to prove to the terrorists that they will fail."

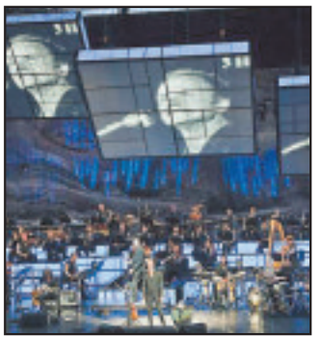
"We as a global community are stronger than them because of tolerance and understanding and at a time like this it is important that we recognise that these are central pillars to all major faiths, including Islam."

"As a group of British Muslim leaders we remain committed to building unity and cohesion within our communities."

The visit was organised by the Ramadhan Foundation, and Markazi Jammat Ahlul Sunnah, one of the oldest umbrella bodies for Sunni Muslim religious leaders and workers in Britain, with significant influence in over 300 mosques, and Islamic Centre in the UK.

The delegation included: Shaykh Muhammad Umar ibn Ramadhan, Chairman of Ramadhan Foundation, Chairman of International Muslim Unity Convention and Senior Member of Majlis Shura Council of Markazi Jamati Ahli Sunnat UK & Overseas, Syed Ahmed Tirmidhi Shah Sahib, President of Markazi Jamati Ahli Sunnat UK & Overseas and Head Imam of Al Jamia Al Zahra Halifax, Allama Qazi Abdul Aziz Chisti, Head Imam/Khateeb Jamia Islamia Ghousia Trust Luton and Secretary General of Markazi Jamati Ahli Sunnat UK.

NEWS FROM KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA



■ SHOWTIME: The Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra perform with Sting

Fireworks and fanfares

THE Live At Chelsea concert series will be kicked off with a bang as the opening evening will feature the inaugural Chelsea Fireworks Prom, soundtracked by the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra at the home of the Chelsea Pensioners.

The Royal Philharmonic has travelled around the world playing in some of the most prestigious venues since its formation in 1987. It has performed with everyone ranging from opera stars such as Andrea Bocelli, José Carreras and the late Luciano Pavarotti, to icons of popular culture such as Burt Bacharach, Barry Manilow, Stevie Wonder and Sting.

On June 17, against the stunning backdrop of the Grade I listed Royal Hospital Chelsea, the RPCO will perform selections from their vast repertoire, including pieces by composers such as Elgar, Brahms, and Puccini, as well as pieces from closer to home such as *The Dam Busters, Jerusalem*, and *Rule Britannia*, kicking off summer in style.

Accompanying the music will be a spectacular fireworks show lighting up the grounds like never before. Andy Hickling, MBE, director of estates, facilities, commercial and quartermaster at The Royal Chelsea Hospital said: "After a fantastic line-up in 2015, we are delighted that we will be welcoming music fans to the Royal Hospital Chelsea again in the summer. The historic home is one of London's architectural gems and offers a stunning backdrop to the world-class artists who will be performing."

Live At Chelsea is hosted in a seated auditorium in the Royal Hospital's courtyard. A portion of the ticket proceeds will go towards funding care for the Chelsea Pensioners who live at The Royal Hospital as well as helping to pay for maintenance of the Grade I listed site.

Wet, Wet, Wet play on June 18 and Simply Red on June 19.

■ SKY SHOW: Fireworks will launch the Live At Chelsea concert series

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Westminster & Pimlico NEWS pick up points

Sainsbury's Store	Melbourne Avenue	West Ealing	W13 9BZ
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Sainsbury's Store	38 Stratton Street	Mayfair	W1J 8LT
Sainsbury's Store	15-17 Tottenham Court Road	Central London	W1T 1BJ
Co-op	504-506 Harrow Road	Paddington	W9 3QA
Tesco Classic Metro	22-25 Bedford Street	London	WC2E 9EQ
Co-op	Golden Cross House	London	WC2R 0RG
Notting Hill Gate Library	1 Pembridge Square	Notting Hill	W2 4EW
Kensal Library	20 Golborne Road		W10 5PF
Coach & Horses Pub	23 Greek Street	Soho	W1D 5DH
Pimlico Library	Lupus Street	Pimlico	SW1V 3EY

Kensington & Chelsea NEWS pick up points

Kensington Central Library	Philimore Walk	Kensington	W8 7RX
North Kensington Library	108 Ladbroke Grove	Kensington	W11 1PZ
Brompton Library	210 Old Brompton Road	London	SW5 0BS
The Tabernacle, Notting Hill	35 Powis Square	Notting Hill	W11 2AY
Chelsea Library	Chelsea Old Town Hall	Chelsea	SW3 5EZ
Chelsea Sports Centre	Chelsea Manor Street	Chelsea	SW3 5PL
Avonmore Lib. & Neighbourhood Ctr	North End Crescent		W14 8TG

Fulham Chronicle pick up points

Fulham Library	598 Fulham Road		SW6 5NX

Hammersmith CHRONICLE pick up points

The Grove Neighbourhood Centre	7 Bradmore Park Road	Hammersmith	W6 0DT
Hammersmith Library	Shepherd's Bush Road		W6 7AT

Shepherd's Bush CHRONICLE pick up points

Westfield Library	6 Wood Lane		W12 7BF
Askew Road Library	87-91 Askew Road		W12 9AS

Breaking snooze: how to help stressed dogs

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

BOW Wow Row Your Boat, Old Mutt Donald Had A Flea and *Mary Had A Little Bone* are among songs that are now music to the ears of residents of Battersea Dogs Home as staff have started playing them lullabies to help them cope with their stay.

The home has introduced soothing nursery rhymes so that hundreds of their homeless canines can enjoy an afternoon snooze. The world-famous rescue has taken a tip from the continent and has introduced a daily Siesta Time to reduce the stress levels of its dogs.

"Siesta Time is a golden hour in Battersea's kennels where the lights are turned off, soothing lullabies are turned on, and all staff and volunteers must adhere to the 'do not disturb' mantra," said a spokeswoman.

"It is the ultimate calming and relaxation period for the dogs that struggle to get shut-eye, enabling the most worried Battersea dogs to doze in contentment."

■ SOUND MOVE: Lullabies are played to stressed residents at Battersea's dogs' home

The introduction of lullabies follows research conducted by the charity that tested and measured the stress levels of dogs when they first arrived at the rescue centre.

Ali Taylor, Head of Canine Behaviour Training at Battersea said: "Often dogs are at their most stressed when they first arrive at Battersea. Kennels can be a very alien environment for a dog, especially if it's a pet that's come from a family home.

"We'll try anything we can to help minimise their anxiety during their stay with us – which is how Siesta Time came about. If you're a dog owner you might notice how often your dog will sleep during the day, but the dogs here struggle to relax when they're surrounded by so much noise in the kennels."

Battersea measured the impact of Siesta Time based on three factors – barking, jumping up and stress-related behaviours. Staff observed how dogs behaved before and after Siesta Time, noticing after just a few days the positive effect the midday kip in kennels was having.

Ali added: "It's amazing what a small but practical idea can do for the welfare of our dogs. We've definitely noticed a change in our kennels, there's less barking and the dogs are generally a lot calmer because of it.

"They know when Siesta Time is coming and many of them are already in their beds before the lights are off. We rehomed more dogs in January this year than we have in any other month over the last two years. That might not directly be because of Siesta Time, but the programme is certainly helping our dogs' relax and that ultimately means they'll find loving homes faster."

Healthy debate on keeping us all fit

UNDER THE WESTWAY

Angela McConville, chief executive of Westway Trust, talks about a partnership with community organisations to help families and older people in North Kensington do more exercise

SOME of Westway Trust's key aspirations for good health and wellbeing are to enable healthier behaviours and encourage physical activity, particularly among groups that currently aren't very active.

In North Kensington less than a third of people currently achieve 30 minutes of exercise a week. Older people in particular tend to be more inactive and the benefits to them of changing that are numerous and well known.

Just in the last month two new pieces of research have shown how important it is for older people to do even a small amount of exercise.

One study, from the University of Pennsylvania, found that just ten minutes activity a week could lengthen the life of an older person, and another, from the University of Miami, found that being active can delay the ageing of the brain by up to a decade.

Research we've done locally made it clear that the barriers for older people here are a perceived lack of local opportunities, sessions at the wrong time of day and the wrong types of exercise.

So, we've joined a partnership of local organisations, including the Royal Borough's Leisure Services, Open Age, EPIC CIC, Age UK Kensington & Chelsea, The Venture Centre, Dalgarno Trust and the Canalside Activity Centre, to encourage greater activity among families and the over-50s.

Called "Go Generation", this partnership over the next three years plans to get 1,800 inactive North Kensington residents doing at least half an hour's activity each week.

We hope that by offering activities like table tennis, canoeing, tennis, bowls, swimming and by getting the sessions as close to people's homes as possible we can overcome these barriers and support families and older people in our community.

We want to promote accessible, informal exercise and we'll be learning along the way as to what works and what can improve.

I hope too this project can act as a template for more partnerships with community organisations operating in North Kensington and the rest of the Royal Borough.

Where we have facilities and expertise, we can use them to bring ideas from the community to life. In this case, that Westway Trust being able to lever investment from Sport England by developing a bid based on combining the networks and insight from partnering organisations to reach under-represented groups with our facilities and expertise in sports and fitness.

In other cases we offer advice, or space, or simply act as a hub for other organisations to come together.

■ ACTIVE COMMUNITIES: Westway Trust is working to develop exercise and activity opportunities

There is an incredible network of community organisations in the area and when an issue or an idea emerges it's not long before someone or some group has sprung up to respond to it.

We don't have the expertise to solve every local challenge but I believe Westway Trust is a significant asset for the community and there is nothing more exciting for us than supporting an innovative new community project and helping it grow and succeed.

Building strong partnerships large and small will be key to delivering our future aspirations; hopefully you'll be aware that we have recently moved to the next stage of our proposal to partner with a sports specialist to deliver our wider sports and fitness vision.

We believe that if done well, bringing in a large-scale, community-focused organisation, that can combine its own expertise in the field with our decades of local knowledge and engagement, will protect what makes Westway Sports and Fitness so valuable to the community, while also allowing significant investment in future improvements and new facilities.

There is still much to be decided on all of this and I hope that people will get in touch with ideas for getting more families and older people active and for partnerships to deliver innovative new projects locally. I'd also welcome your thoughts about our proposed new sports partnership.

■ FIGHTING BACK: Shepherd's Bush market traders are hailing a legal victory

Court ruling boosts market traders

MARKET traders in Shepherd's Bush say a court ruling to overturn a controversial government decision on the site's redevelopment is a "beacon of hope" for stallholders.

Traders were celebrating a major victory last week after a compulsory purchase order imposed on the market by the former minister Eric Pickles was overturned in the Court of Appeal.

A public inquiry 2014 found that developer Orion's plans for Shepherd's Bush Market did not offer sufficient guarantees and safeguards for traders - but Mr Pickles overruled his own inspector's recommendation that the plans should be rejected.

This decision has now been overruled in the Court of Appeal, offering traders a temporary reprieve in their fight to protect the market's future.

James Horada, chairman of the Shepherd's Bush Market Tenants' Association, said: "The judgement is a beacon of hope for the long-standing businesses of Shepherd's Bush Market.

"These precious market businesses need to be valued and cradled. The tenants of Shepherd's Bush Market deserve justice and these developers must not be allowed to damage our businesses any longer."

Hammersmith MP Andy Slaughter, who supported the traders' court appeal, added: "This is a fantastic outcome for everyone who shops and works in Shepherd's Bush Market and for all Londoners fighting to save traditional markets from faceless developments.

"This is a major step towards saving this 100-year-old market for future generations."

Orion has said its regeneration plans for the area will create new homes and opportunities for start-up businesses, while "rejuvenating" the market.

Moped terror pair plotted gun attack on police station

BY LWN REPORTER
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

TERRORIST conspirators have been convicted after plotting a 'drive-by' attack on the streets of Shepherd's Bush.

Tarik Hassane and Suhaib Majeed were convicted of conspiring to commit a terrorist murder and two other men pleaded guilty to firearms offences.

Counter terrorism investigators foiled the plot after internet records showed that the men were targeting Shepherd's Bush police station and the Parachute Regiment Territorial Army Centre in White City.

Police said 22-year-old Hassane, of Dalgarno Way, Ladbroke Grove, and 21-year-old Majeed, of the Church Street Estate in Marylebone, were the central figures in the "murderous" plot.

They intended to target police officers or members of the military before escaping on a moped, Met investigators said.

Nyall Hamlett, 25, of Great Western Road, Notting Hill, and Nathan Cuffy, 26, of Dartmouth Close, Notting Hill, were also involved in planning the attack but were found not guilty of conspiring to commit a terrorist murder. They both admitted to firearms offences.

The convictions come amid fears that London could be the next major European city to be targeted by terrorists, following the attacks in Brussels last Monday, March 21.

Commander Dean Haydon, head of the Met's counter terrorism command, said: "Our priority as always was ensuring the public's safety by preventing these four very dangerous men, two of whom intended to carry out a terrorist atrocity in London.

"They were planning to target police or military personnel before escaping on a moped, but members of the public also could have been victims had their plans not been thwarted."

Hassane is thought to have been the leader of the group, having pledged an oath of allegiance to Islamic State in July 2014.

A medical student known to friends as 'The Surgeon', he was studying in the Sudan when his accomplices were arrested in September 2014.

When he returned to the UK he continued to research the police station and TA centre using Google Maps.

Following Hassane's arrest in October 2014, police were able to uncover the full extent of the plot, seizing five firearms and ammunition.

They also found hundreds of devices including graphic images of beheadings and other material indicating support for Islamic State.

Commander Haydon added: "During this investigation my officers worked closely with colleagues from [gang crime unit] Trident resulting in five guns, all with ammunition, being taken out of circulation.

"Subsequently they worked hard with the Crown Prosecution Service to gather and present the best possible evidence for court, ensuring these men were taken off the streets and could no longer pose a risk to public safety."

A date for sentencing has not yet been set.

■ CONSPIRATORS: Suhaib Majeed, left and Tarik Hassane, right, face long jail sentences

Met spends £11m reinforcing its armoury

ISIS terrorists plotting any Brussels-style attack on London will now face the most fearsome and lethal firepower ever assembled to protect the streets of Britain.

Scotland Yard has ordered an extra £11.2 million worth of guns and equipment to further arm the 2,800 counter-terror police patrolling the capital with agents from MI5, MI6 and the shoot-to-kill force of crack troops from the SAS, the Special Boat Squadron and the clandestine Special Reconnaissance Regiment.

All of the armed police are understood to now be under the same orders as those given to the special services, to "take swift action to neutralise terrorists" with no negotiation.

Scotland Yard made the request to buy the latest guns and tactical equipment before the bomb attacks in Brussels.

Due to the size of the requested new arsenal, the request has to be signed off by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime. The Met has confirmed that if MOPAC does not give the go-ahead, it will buy the new guns and kit from its own budget.

The move to significantly strengthen the Met's firepower comes after Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe announced in January that he is putting an extra 600 armed officers on the streets.

Commenting on the move to buy the latest weaponry, a Met spokesman told the *Evening Standard*: "The Commissioner has previously committed to increasing the number of firearms officers and this provides the necessary equipment.

"We are in continuing discussions re additional counter-terrorism funding and our planning assumption is that the additional kit will be funded from the additional counter-terrorism money announced in the budget.

"Should this not be the case we will manage the expenditure from within our existing budget."

It is expected that the Met request will be given the green light after London's deputy mayor for policing Stephen Greenhalgh said: "Budgets shouldn't be a barrier to ensuring we keep our capital safe. Having enough armed response vehicles is critical for dealing with the kind of marauding attacks we're talking about."

Ken Marsh, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, told the *Standard*: "There's large amounts of weapons required, there's a lot of tactical equipment needed based on that as well.

"Not only hand weapons are needed, but obviously automatic deployment. It's paramount that we get the equipment."

Mr Marsh added: "We are at a heightened state, we are ready and capable as we speak, but there's other equipment available that has been recognised as being needed and we'll hopefully get that as soon as possible."

School raises £120,000 to fight poverty

PARENTS, teachers and friends of Eaton Square School have dug deep to help a good cause, raising a staggering £120,000 for humanitarian aid charity in just one night.

The pre-preparatory and preparatory school, based in Belgravia, hosted its annual charity ball last week at the Hyde Park Hotel inviting a range of guests to come together in support of the school's long-standing charity partner, Miracles.

To generate vital funds needed to support the Tower Hamlets charity, which aims to help children and their carers living in poverty, the special evening saw teachers, parents and students turn out in force and participate in a range of live and silent auctions in the run up to, and during the event.

Chosen by headmaster, Sebastian Hepher in a bid to support local charities which help those in need across London, the annual ball kicked off the school's second year of fundraising for Miracles and follows last year's impressive £80,000 donation.

Eaton Square School will also be hosting a series of other events throughout the school year to raise money, including cake sales, non-uniform days and mad hair days.

Mr Hepher, said: "I am absolutely blown away by the kindness and generosity of the friends of Eaton Square School – and absolutely thrilled that we've been able to raise such a staggering amount of money for this worthy cause.

"We've partnered with Miracles for more than a year now and have seen first-hand just how valuable and meaningful their work in the community is. They make such a significant difference to the lives of many people across our capital and we are proud to be able to support them in whatever way we can."

Actress in TB awareness call

ACTRESS Emma Thompson, the Mayor of London's tuberculosis ambassador, called on Londoners to get tested for TB on World TB Day, March 24.

Thompson stars in a film about the disease. The movie, jointly commissioned by the Greater London Authority and Public Health England, follows Thompson and her son Tindy Agaba as they travel to London's Whittington Hospital to meet the consultants who treated Tindy when he was diagnosed and treated with TB in 2011. The film will be used by PHE to raise awareness of the disease, which is more prevalent in London than any other capital in western Europe. In 2014 there were 2,572 TB cases reported in London and while this has been a 15 per cent decrease from 2013, and a 26 per cent drop from 2012, rates remain highest in London compared to the rest of the UK.

Thompson said: "The scale of TB in a world class city like London is truly alarming and World TB Day is a great opportunity to get informed about and see a doctor if you have any concerns. ".

■ ACCOLADE: Sherice Pitter from Hammersmith has been named the Creative and Cultural Skills Apprentice of the Year. This national award celebrates apprentices working in the creative and cultural industries who have shown exceptional commitment and ambition to learn new skills. Sherice, 21, started her relationship with Hammersmith's Lyric theatre in 2011. In 2013 Sherice, who attended Fulham Cross Girls School and Phoenix High School, became Young People's Apprentice at the theatre, completing her Level 2 and then her Level 3 Community Arts apprenticeship before achieving a permanent position as development officer at the venue in September 2015.
Sian Alexander, executive director at Lyric, said: 'We are so proud of Sherice for all that she achieved during her apprenticeship and thrilled to have her journey continue with us now as development officer in our fundraising department.' Sherice, pictured, said: 'I feel honoured to be recognised for my achievements as an apprentice. I found it very challenging in school and college and having the opportunity to complete an apprenticeship has started me on a great career path.'

Mayor: third runway at Heathrow 'astonishing cost to public health'

BY LWN REPORTER
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A NEW report published by the Mayor of London has revealed what he claims is "the astonishing cost to the health of Londoners" of a third runway at Heathrow.

Boris Johnson's office claims that "despite the owners' bold claims about the potential of improved technology and quieter engines, building a new runway would fail to curtail the effect of the din of jet engines on local people. In fact it would unnecessarily expose 124 more schools and 43,000 school children to a level of aircraft noise proven to affect their level of reading and memory, than if the airport were to remain with two runways."

The report also reveals that the long term health effects of exposure to the extra noise caused by a third runway would be valued at what Mr Johnson says is "a staggering £20billion to £25billion over 60 years".

The mayor said that there was no silver bullet for Heathrow's noise nightmare and that the only credible solution to Britain's aviation dilemma was to pursue plans for a new hub airport to the east of the capital, away from populated areas.

In his new report, called *Landing the right airport*, the mayor's team set out what they see as "the overwhelming case against the expansion of Heathrow" – and the logic behind building a four-runway hub to the east of London.

Key points made included:

■ All sides agree, at least half a million people will be exposed to a significant level of noise from a third runway – more than the five main rival European airports combined. And if flight routing is not optimised then that figure reaches nearer one million people.

■ An analysis of evidence provided by the Airports Commission reveals that on a like-for-like basis a third runway would expose 124 more schools and 43,200 more schoolchildren to an unacceptable level of noise compared to no expansion.

■ Guidance published by the Department for Transport in December has allowed the mayor's team to calculate the health impact of an expanded Heathrow as costing £20billion to £25billion over 60 years. That reflects the increased risk of heart attack, stroke, dementia and other disorders shown to be linked to prolonged exposure to aircraft noise.

■ A third runway will mean more than double the number of surface access journeys to and from the airport – and in order to keep the numbers on the road manageable, the commission's own consultants propose that an airport access charge of £20 to £40 for every car/taxi could be needed. That would in turn mean the number of public transport journeys to and from the airport would jump from around 80,000 a day now to over 300,000 a day. That scale of demand could not be accommodated without major unbudgeted investment in rail infrastructure.

■ An expansion at Heathrow would require the airport to triple its debt and equity levels. That would be an unprecedented level of debt for a private airport and the Government would almost certainly need to step in to secure their funding.

■ The Airports Commission's own data reveals a three-runway Heathrow would be full in 2030 and subject to the same problems of congestion and delays that the airport faces today – and with little improvement in connectivity that UK business so clearly needs.

■ Only a four-runway hub airport in one of several potential locations to the east of London has any chance of being built and delivering the increase in connectivity the UK requires. A hub to the east of London would spur regeneration and new housing, contribute £92billion to the UK economy by 2050 and support 336,000 jobs around the country.

Mr Johnson stressed: "There is no silver bullet for the noise nightmare of a third runway at Heathrow and any approval of expansion would clearly result in decades of legal challenges."

The mayor added: "Its cramped urban location simply cannot accommodate the kind of airport this country requires to compete on the global stage and the cost to the taxpayer of necessary road and rail connections would be huge, however well disguised.

"That means the Government has a bold decision to make – but not a difficult one. They must surely finally recognise that the only long term vision that sustains our economy and safeguards our health is to build a four runway hub airport at the Thames Estuary or Stansted."

The mayor's report also argues passionately that a second runway at Gatwick would not be the answer to the UK's aviation problems.

The report claims: "It has already benefited from the constraints at Heathrow and offers useful links to overseas hubs and holiday destinations. But even the Airports Commission belatedly recognised that the delivery of a hub airport must be the aim. A second runway at Gatwick would not give us that hub.

"In December 2015 the Government rightly recognised that it did not have the evidence to be able to justify an expansion of Heathrow.

"The mayor is now calling on them to consider the full range of credible alternatives. They will need to face down the vested interests who are set on an expansion of Heathrow that is not in the national interest.

"But he is clear that in order to secure the connectivity needed to support future growth and prosperity, and without a dire impact on public health, we must do better than Heathrow."

Action call for disabled travel

THE London Assembly wants more to be done to help disabled people get about the city.

More than a million Londoners have a hearing loss and about 175,000 Londoners live with sight loss. Every day, 1.3 million journeys are made by disabled people – in London alone.

The assembly's transport committee has conducted an investigation into how these problems could be dealt with and what needs to be done to make London more accessible. The committee's report, *Leading the Way: Travelling with a sensory impairment in London*, wants:

■ Increased enforcement against private hire operators and drivers who refuse to accept passengers with assistance dogs, and facilitating complaints from passengers who have experienced this problem.

■ Improved provision of real-time travel information across the network, in formats accessible for people with a sensory impairment.

■ Ensuring greater consistency in bus design, including the availability of hearing loops and providing clearer, accessible signage.

■ Using technology to making it easier for visually impaired bus passengers to identify the bus they need to board.

■ Working with boroughs to remove excess street clutter from London's pavements, while applying consistent guidance to ensure 'shared space' environments are safe for pedestrians with a sensory impairment, including assistance dog users.

Valerie Shawcross, chair of the transport committee said: "One of the most concerning issues is where private hire drivers or minicabs have illegally refused to accept passengers with an assistance dog. Even if it only happens in a minority of cases, this reduces the confidence of people with a sensory impairment that they can travel around London independently.

"The number of prosecutions pursued by TfL seems implausibly low, given the evidence the committee has heard about the problem. People with a sensory impairment can't be the last people sitting on the bus or the train. London must have a truly accessible transport network that reflects the needs of the sensory impaired at every stage."

Westminster's Oscar winners

TWO graduates from the University of Westminster won Oscars at the glittering Hollywood ceremony last month.

Asif Kapadia won Best Documentary Feature for *Amy*, which concerned the life of the late singer songwriter Amy Winehouse, while *Stutterer*, produced by film graduate Shan Christopher Ogilvie, won the best Live Action Short Film category. The university heaped praise on both winners, saying they were an inspiration and role models to its current crop of students.

Mr Kapadia graduated from the University of Westminster in 1994 and has directed several award-winning films, including the 2010 documentary *Senna*, which won the World Cinema Audience Award Documentary at the Sundance Film Festival 2011.

Pay, pensions and petrol top priority

BY LWN REPORTER
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AS George Osborne was delivering his Budget before Easter, Londoners posed with their own Budget boxes in front of Parliament and revealed their financial priorities for the fiuture.

The participants were all members of Noddle – a service where people can check their credit score for free, for life. A survey of 1,000 Noddle users found that the vast majority were engaged with the Budget, with over 95 per cent watching, listening or reading about it either at the time or shortly afterwards to find out how they would be affected.

When asked what they would like to see in Mr Osborne's plans, the most popular response, selected by more than seven in 10 respondents, was a change to the tax-free personal allowance, meaning people can earn more before starting to pay tax. Petrol prices are still a big issue for consumers, with a cut to or freeze on fuel duty listed as a priority by 43 per cent of Noddle users. This was very closely followed by wanting no change to pensions, meaning a tax-free lump sum can still be taken at 55, selected by 42 per cent of people.

Clearly, petrol prices, pay before tax and pensions are top priorities for the public – their 'three Ps'. In response the Chancellor delivered a freeze in fuel duty, no mention of pensions, and a promise to crack down on tax evasion, a move expected to rake in £12 billion.

When Noddle users were asked what they would like to see for the country in future Budgets, greater enforcement of taxes on big business by the Government was listed by a massive 74 per cent of those who answered the survey. Two-thirds of people wanted to see more funding for the NHS, and just over half (51 per cent) wanted to see greater investment in mental health services.

More support for people wanting to buy their own home was still listed as a priority by over a quarter of Noddle users (26 per cent), despite the Government having already introduced a number of measures in recent years to support people on to the housing ladder.

Less popular was infrastructure spending, with just 16 per cent of people saying that they'd like to see more spending on projects such as HS2.

Jacqueline Dewey, managing director at Noddle, said: "People told us their main concerns for the Budget were the three Ps: pay, and earning more before tax; petrol prices; and pensions. At a country-wide level, the public told us that they want the Government to do more to tackle tax avoidance by big business. However, it's clear that funding for health services is also a big concern.

"Noddle is focused on helping everyone improve their financial health, so we wanted to get a snapshot of what the public was looking for from the Budget.

"We don't know if the Chancellor will have met the aspirations of all our customers, but all of us can do our own budget planning. Checking your credit score is one way to keep on top of your finances and this can be done for free, for life with Noddle."

■ LONDON'S FINANCIAL PRIORITIES: Users of the credit score service Noddle in central London

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All home prices above national average in nine boroughs

YOU cannot buy a home for less than the average UK house price in almost a third of London boroughs, new figures reveal.

In nine out of 32 boroughs, there is not one flat or house on sale for less than £191,812.

The figures also show that property is available for less than £100,000 in only one borough, Bexley, where there is a studio flat on the market for £94,995.

The statistics show that the second cheapest borough to buy property in is Newham, where a studio flat is available for £100,000. Lambeth has the third cheapest property on sale — a studio flat where the asking price is £105,000.

Inventiveness of the long distance runner

STUDENTS from Imperial College London are aiming to become European champions in a competition to design the car that can run the furthest on the least fuel.

The Imperial Racing Team are stepping up to the plate with their hydrogen prototype vehicle, the university's entry in the world's longest-running student competition, Shell Eco-marathon Europe, which will be held in London this summer.

The competition challenges students to design and build ultra-energy efficient cars, then drive them on a purpose-built track to see which can travel the furthest on the least amount of energy.

"With 230 European teams entered to take part, competition is expected to be fierce, but the Imperial team is committed to sustainable mobility and their unique approach to the design of their fuel cell may give them the competitive edge," said a spokeswoman for the event.

■ CONTENDERS: A recent Shell Eco-marathon

Max Marlow-Naylor, team principal, said: "Shell Eco-marathon 2016 is an incredible opportunity to compete directly against other engineering universities from across Europe. In our first year we hope to debut with the most competitive car from the London area, as well as showcase innovative technologies developed at Imperial College on a global stage"

Marc Mason, academic lead, added: "Our debut entry into the Shell Eco-marathon gives our students a fantastic opportunity, not only to apply technology developed at Imperial College, but more importantly, develop their skills and talents.

"The project is entirely run by the students, they do the project management and financials as well as the engineering development of the car. With their dedication, I anticipate that we will do well at this year's competition"

This year, Shell Eco-marathon Europe will be showcased at Make the Future London – a festival of ideas and innovation taking place a Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park from June 30 to July 3.

The free-of-charge public event will feature bright energy ideas that address the global energy challenge – how to generate more energy, while producing less CO_2. Visitors will be invited to contribute their own ideas for a low-carbon future.

Cost-cutting jeopardises historic role of the BBC

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

FEARS are growing that the BBC's long and traditionally-unparalleled coverage of The Queen and the Royal Family could be threatened by savings forced on the nation's favourite broadcaster by the cuts-obsessed Government.

Although in TV circles the experts agree that "nobody does it better" than the BBC when it comes to in-depth but affectionate films of the monarchy, such are the deep cutbacks that the Corporation is having to make that even the royal desk at its news division could be hit by the drastic pruning of its television budget.

With the Government bending the BBC's arm to make it find savings running into hundreds of millions of pounds and Culture Secretary John Whittingdale indicating that he would like to see some sort of state control over who runs the BBC, by appointing Government-approved non-executives to its governing board, few at Broadcasting House are entirely confident that royal coverage will be ring-fenced.

Instead, TV executives fear that the BBC will be left with little money to be able to continue to afford sending news crews to accompany members of the Royal Family on trips abroad and a tightening budget could mean far fewer of the royal documentaries at which the BBC excels at making but which are expensive to produce because of the months they can take to film.

The threat is worsened because the Government openly favours private enterprise over public institutions and commercial broadcasters ITV and Sky avidly clamour to secure the rights to as many royal programmes as possible because they are so lucrative in foreign sales.

"The fact of the matter is that the Royal Family sells, programmes on the royals tend to draw a large audience," said one TV executive.

"If ITV or Sky can land a big royal exclusive, and ITV has landed many recently, and with more to come, then they can command rich returns in advertising.

"One fear at the BBC is that if the Government can privatise sections of the NHS, as it has done, what is to stop it effecting the privatisation of parts of the BBC's traditional output, like its royal coverage?

"Royal programmes which have for so long been such an important part of the BBC's coverage could go the same way as much of the sport has done, taken over exclusively by the commercial rivals."

The BBC's now-precarious situation has not been helped much by members of the royal family recently giving exclusive access to ITV.

"ITV won a big scoop earlier in the year when Ant and Dec fronted the film that marked the 40th anniversary of the Prince's Trust," said the executive.

"ITV scooped the Beeb again over the weekend with the remarkable *Our Queen At Ninety* documentary, with an unprecedented number of members of the Royal Family taking part. Then, because he's got pals at ITV News, Prince William has been giving exclusive interviews to them, and ITV has also landed the exclusive coverage of the pageant at Windsor next month to celebrate Her Majesty's 90th birthday, again presented by Ant and Dec.

"There is of course the opinion that presenters of celebrity and variety shows may not give programmes about the royals quite the same gravitas as, say, a Dimbleby or an Attenborough, but perhaps Buckingham Palace does not want just gravitas anymore, perhaps it wants populism too.

"But either way, with ITV becoming the new flavour of the month at the palace, it's becoming increasingly harder for the BBC to command its old crown as king of royal telly and unless the BBC gets a big break soon it may have to start seriously considering whether to leave all of the royal coverage to the commercial channels.

"That would be a shame because when it comes to important state events the TV audience has traditionally always turned to the Beeb."

However, although the BBC admits that it can "no longer afford to do everything", it is not prepared to lose its royal programming without a fight.

BBC bosses are hinting that they have an outstanding royal film up their sleeves which they plan to screen this summer around blanket, all-channels coverage of The Queen's 90th birthday celebrations.

The birthday documentary is so special that at present the BBC is giving no details of its content nor broadcast date, but insiders say it will captivate the nation and Charlotte Moore, Controller of BBCTV, pledges that it will be "landmark" stuff.

Indeed, Ms Moore claims that none of the BBC's rivals will be able to hold a candle to what it has planned.

"The BBC is offering an unrivalled range and breadth of programmes to mark Her Majesty 90th birthday," said Ms Moore. "This will include landmark documentaries and extensive television coverage with special events marking the occasion. This is a significant moment for the nation and the BBC will be right at the heart of the celebrations."

A BBC spokesman added: "We have planned a wide range of programming to mark Her Majesty The Queen's 90th birthday this year, including extensive coverage of key events, the landmark BBC One documentary and specially made programmes across other outlets, both here and overseas.

"BBC One will broadcast three days of live events to mark The Queen's official 90th birthday, beginning on Friday, June 10 with a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral. There will be the traditional display of pageantry of The Queen's Birthday Parade on Saturday, June 11on Horse Guards Parade, culminating with members of The Royal Family making their annual appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to the delight of thousands of people gathered along the Mall.

"On Sunday, June 12, BBC One will broadcast a special celebration taking place on The Mall to close the weekend of birthday celebrations. The iconic stretch will be transformed for The Patron's Lunch with 10,000 people gathered to celebrate The Queen's patronage of over 600 charities and organisations on the occasion of her 90th birthday.

"Alongside coverage of these events, the BBC will broadcast a range of special programming including the BBC One documentary, documentaries on Radio 2 and the World Service, and coverage on BBC News outlets around the country."

TV pundits are now wondering whether "the landmark documentary" may match *Elizabeth R*, the previously definitive royal film made for the BBC in 1992 by stellar producer-director Eddie Mirzoeff.

Elizabeth R was made to celebrate the 40th anniversary of The Queen's reign and was so ground-breaking that it was watched by 30 million viewers in the UK, the largest audience for a documentary in the history of British television. The Queen was so delighted by it that she gave a party at Buckingham Palace for the BBC crew.

The behind-the-scenes film of the life of the royals came the closest that TV has ever come to getting an interview with The Queen, as Her Majesty provided a voiceover commentary.

"We filmed from mid-1990 to 1991 but when we got to the cutting room we were still trying to find a shape to the programme and I said to the palace 'you don't know how much this would be improved by a personal voice," said Mirzoeff.

"And then The Queen agreed to do it. There was just me, the sound recordist and her press secretary present. There was no camera there, it was just her talking. I said I just wanted to elaborate on a few things we had been filming and she was just terrific – we went away thinking, 'this is magic!'"

The palace apparently felt the same. Without the intimidating presence of a camera, The Queen relaxed and revealed her thoughts, allowing an insight which was captivating and enchanted viewers around the world.

On going to Balmoral, Her Majesty revealed that "it's rather nice to hibernate"; on the honours system she commented, "I think people need pats on the backs sometimes, it's a very dingy world otherwise" and of her weekly meetings with prime ministers she observed, "They unburden themselves, I think it's rather nice to feel that one's a sort of sponge and everybody can come and tell one things. Occasionally, one is able to put one's point of view, they may not have seen it from that angle."

"Eddie Mirzoeff was right, *Elizabeth R* was TV magic," said a veteran producer, "it still stands as the sort of world-beating royal stuff that the BBC does better than anyone if it is given half a chance and the budget.

"Obviously the Royal Family have all sorts of advisers these days who are completely expert in knowing what is best for the monarchy and its depiction in the media and it is a shame that recently the BBC hasn't been getting as much of a look-in as ITV and some foreign news channels.

"Tony Hall [the BBC Director General] made a good point recently when he said that the BBC doesn't belong to its staff or to the Government, but that it belongs to the people of Britain. They pay the licence fee and as he said, that makes them its shareholders.

"It's a bit the same with the monarchy, she is the Queen of the people, we're her shareholders. And when important occasions happen, the people look to the BBC to best provide the coverage of their Queen.

"If the cuts that the BBC is being forced to make eventually mean that the BBC loses that role, the people will miss it."

■ **HAPPY FAMILIES: The royals have featured in ground-breaking ITV programmes**

■ **FRONT MEN: Ant and Dec hosted the film that marked the 40th anniversary of the Prince's Trust**

Capital nights

EDITED BY GEOFF BAKER

BBC chiefs are keen to bring back tactless titan Alan Partridge in a new show that is set to terrify celebrities.

TV bosses are eager to sign up to Steve Coogan's new idea to make an Alan Partridge chat show which would challenge the nerves of the famous.

More than 20 years after Coogan's incompetent and offensive Little Englander won the adoration of the nation with the spoof chat show *Knowing Me Knowing You* – on which the Right winger Partridge interviewed "stars" played by actors – he is now considering bringing back the show, but with real celebrity guests.

"We might do a real one, with real guests. We are having a think about it," Coogan revealed to Channel 4 chat host Alan Carr.

He added: "The thing is we really want to make fun of the guests in a way that is a bit edgy.

"I interviewed Elton John once and made fun of his propensity of buying huge bouquets of flowers and being a gay ex-pothead. He was great. He wore his pink suit to look extra gay for us."

Insiders say the BBC is extremely interested in the plan, not least because the BAFTA-nominated *Knowing Me Knowing You* was a huge hit with viewers back in 1994.

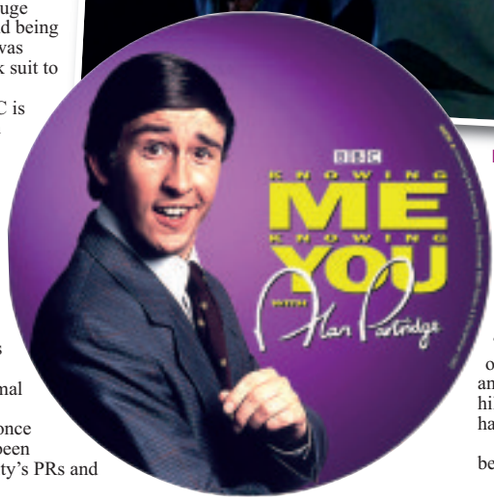
But the chat show could prove to be a nightmare for whomever wins the hapless job of being its guest booker.

These days it is normal for many stars only to appear on chat shows once strict guidelines have been agreed with the celebrity's PRs and management and that producers pledge that the host will not ask questions about recent scandals and private lives and will only talk about the film, play or book that the star is on the show to promote.

Some years ago Ruby Wax hosted a chat show that broke the "gentlemen's agreement" and would often come out with embarrassing and pointed questions that caused hilarity for the audience but made the hair of the stars' PRs turn white.

Since then, the cult of celebrity has become so strong that stars can now insist that they are not mocked or ridiculed in any way – but Partridge, with his poor taste and philistine self-promotion, would be the perfect tool to prick the bubble of pretension and BBC chiefs know that viewers would love it.

But as the famous are traditionally made very nervous by the suggestion of interviews that are "edgy", only one problem remains – are there enough celebs on the planet who are prepared to laugh at themselves in order to fill a whole series of Alan Partridge shows?



Ah-ha! Is Coogan's run as Alan Partridge about to be extended?

■ **QUESTIONS OF TASTE: Steve Coogan**

Critics can be a Thorne in a Fellowes' side

PRICKLY viewers of Lord Fellowes' recent adaptation of *Doctor Thorne* have told the otherwise-acclaimed writer that he must do better if he is to continue with further interpretations of the *Chronicles of Barsetshire*.

Fans of the period drama complained that the ITV series was not up to the standard of m'lord's celebrated triumph *Downton Abbey* when it came to historical authenticity.

Whereas *Downton* was much-praised for the accuracy of its costumes and props, Lord Fellowes' treatment of Anthony Trollope's classic has been a thorn in the side for those who insist that historical representation is spot on.

The last episode of *Doctor Thorne*, the third novel of Trollope's series, caused barbs from viewers who claimed that a number of the embellishments were a bit iffy.

They complained that:

■ There was "a bizarre over-use of artificial flowers in the hair of Trollope's female characters", said to be not very 19th Century.

■ In one scene Sir Louis Scatcherd was seen "scoffing hexagonal crackers that looked exactly like modern day Millers' Damsels".

■ A "hand-knitted baby shawl was clearly machine-made and probably from Mothercare or was a Jasper Conran baby blanket".

■ Mary Thorne "wore pink eye shadow which was not of the period".

Oo-err. Other than that there was general praise for "sex thimble" Tom Hollander as the somewhat diminutive good doctor and there are hopes that Lord Fellowes will be hired by ITV to adapt more series from Trollope's Barset saga as period drama continues to be all the rage, even when minor details enrage.

Artist rises to Bake Off challenge

GREAT British Bake Off queen Nadiya Hussain has commissioned a touching painting in tribute to her "rock cake" – her husband without whose loving support she might not have had the will power to enter, let alone win, the treasured BBC crown.

The portrait of the pair, which captures their tender love, has just been completed by Dorset artist David Manners.

Nadiya became a national treasure after 15 million viewers – the biggest TV audience of 2015 – watched her win last year's *Bake Off* final, in which she baked 16 iced buns, raspberry-flavoured mille-feuille, one of host Paul Hollywood's recipes, and a multi-layered presentation showstopper which took the form of "My Big Fat British Wedding Cake".

Since winning the show, Nadiya's career has rocketed. She is now a columnist for both *The Times* and *Essentials* magazine, she has signed publishing deals with Penguin Random House and Hodder Children's Books and she has become a regular reporter for the BBC's *The One Show* and is a presenter on *Loose Women*.

But none of the fame now rightfully rewarding the mother of three might have happened at all had it not been for the support and encouragement of her husband Abdal.

"He gave me the confidence to apply for *Bake Off*," said Nadiya.

"He said, 'you're really good, you're really clever, you should just do it, what's the worse that will ever happen?'

And when her spirits flagged during the competition, it was handsome Abdal who helped her keep on keeping on.

"He would tell me, 'Get a grip, it's just baking. Get in there and do it'," she said.

The hearts of millions melted when Nadiya won and Abdal turned to her and whispered, "I'm so proud of you, you are amazing!" and to record that triumphant moment Lyme Regis artist Manners has captured their devotion in a large portrait which will hang on the wall of their home in Milton Keynes.

"In conversations with her agent I mentioned that I thought Nadiya was an inspirational Muslim lady and the idea of a portrait of the two of them grew," said David.

"The agent sent me a number of photographs to work from and on its completion I was delighted to know that Nadiya and Abdal loved it," said David.

■ **PICTURE OF HAPPINESS: Nadiya and Abdal Hussain**

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Capital nights

EDITED BY GEOFF BAKER

Stones are back – and making an exhibition of themselves

THE Exiles On Main Street will be the King's Road home-comers on Monday evening when The Rolling Stones make a very rare public appearance back on their block.

The red carpet at The Saatchi Gallery will be rolled out to await the arrival of Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts, Ronnie Wood and their partners, wives, children, grandchildren and a host of glittering guests for the much-anticipated opening of *Exhibitionism*, the story of the Stones told through a collection of more than 500 of their personal artefacts.

Expect a huge crush as Stones fans and most of Europe's entire press corps will be out in force to snap pix of the band attending the VIP party night of the archive that is tipped to be the greatest rock and roll bank in the world.

Doubtless the most-hollered question from the hordes of fans and media will be, "When are you going to be playing in London?"

Veteran Stones-watchers know that Sir Mick is far too artful a PR man to let slip a date for that long-overdue *Let's Spend The Knight Together* yet, but as this July will mark the third year since the Stones have performed in their home town, the odds on a live show here soon are shortening fast.

Although the Stones need no birthday or special occasion to mount a London concert, everyone likes an anniversary and as 2016 marks the 40th year since "newcomer" Ronnie Wood officially joined the band that could suffice as reason enough for another giant show of glory like their 2013 gigs in Hyde Park.

In the meantime, fresh from their tour of Latin America, the Stones are said to be avidly keen to tour around the two floors of the gallery that will house the splendour of *Exhibitionism*, which will present what the press release promises to be "never before seen dressing room and backstage paraphernalia, rare instruments; original stage designs, iconic costumes, rare audio tracks and video footage; personal diaries; poster and album cover artwork; and unique wraparound cinematic experiences that celebrate every aspect of their careers".

Although fans are expected to camp out from the night before in order to get a good spot to yell for an autograph, insiders say the band itself will rock up at any time from 7.0 pm.

Over the years the band have become masters of the dramatic entrance for public appearances, arriving in everything from an open-top 50s Cadillac, playing on the back of an open-top truck, landing in a hot air balloon and, on the occasion of the wake at the 100 Club for their old pal and pianist Ian Stewart, taking everyone by surprise by arriving in a Ford Fiesta, so expect something different, including, quite possibly, them turning up on an old red double-decker bus.

Exhibitionism will open to the public the next day, Tuesday April 5.

LONDON CALLING: The Rolling Stones are on show – in more ways than one – at London's Saatchi Gallery, in an exhibition featuring more than 500 of their personal artefacts

GREAT news! London's most talented and tipped-for-the-top singer songwriter is back in the game – after a winter sojourn, the superbly-brilliant Emily Lee will return to the stage in April.

Emily Lee will be headlining at the Camden Barfly on April 26, marking her first gig with her new band. The Cheltenham-born musician, whose avid fans include everyone from Billy Bragg and Chris Evans to the editor of this column, is taking an electric turn from her soulful acoustic performances which have made her the stand-out favourite to become London's next truly big name.

"I've wanted to form a band for some while now because quite a lot of my songs require drums and I want to go electric as it's more viable for radio play and it will give the songs more kick," said Emily. "I'm really excited about this new direction, it makes a lot of sense because radio doesn't give so many breaks to acoustic performers and I can't wait to be up on stage in Camden doing my songs with the band."

Emily, whose fans also include Ginger Wildheart of The Wildhearts, will also be appearing at St Mellitus Church on April 2 as part of the Hanwell Hootie. Many in the music business are predicting that this will be the year of the big break for Emily, who has been bravely battling to make it since she first appeared on the capital's scene in 2012.

"They can't ignore me forever," says Emily who is, as her signature song says, very, very special.

NOW this would make the Daleks take him seriously – 50 years after he turned down the part, the thunderously-voiced Brian Blessed says he would like to be the new *Doctor Who*.

The much-cherished actor has revealed that he would like to be considered for the part of the time lord after Peter Capaldi steps down.

Brian says he was offered the part back in 1966, when BBC producers told him, "We're very keen for you to be the Doctor, to follow William Hartnell, and we'd like you to play him very young. You've got a very vivid imagination, Brian. You can be quite normal and then also very, very eccentric."

Unfortunately Brian had to reject the offer because of other acting commitments but now he says, "I would love to play the Doctor, absolutely."

Bridge presents reggae greats

THE whistling organ tune from the Harry J Allstars' reggae classic *Liquidator* is a familiar sound at Stamford Bridge.

For years it has been the music to which Chelsea's own footballing allstars – or otherwise – have been welcomed onto the pitch at 3pm every Saturday afternoon.

But while the Blues' strikers have been worryingly off target in front of goal this season, the Bridge will be playing host to a double header of reggae legends for a rare live performance spanning three generations of ska.

Neville Staple, singer with The Specials and Fun Boy Three, is teaming up with Dandy Livingstone, the Jamaican-born producer often credited as one of the founding fathers of the ska movement, for a world exclusive show at the 'Under the Bridge' night club in Fulham Road.

After joining two tone pioneers The Specials in the late 70s when they were still known as The Coventry Automatics – initially as their roadie – Staple sang in his distinctive style on several of the band's biggest hits, from the era-defining *Ghost Town* to the timeless *Too Much Too Young*.

He will share the bill with Livingstone, the acclaimed musician and producer, best known for penning reggae standards *Rudy, A Message To You* and *Suzanne, Beware of the Devil*, and young Londoners Buster Shuffle in a not-to-be-missed night celebrating three generations of ska.

Three Generations of Ska featuring Neville Staple takes place at Under the Bridge on Friday, April 22.

LEGEND: Reggae master Neville Staple heads for the Fulham Road

WINE & DINE

The food and drink page for West London

WATCHING French baker Eric Kayser at work in the kitchen, it's easy to see why he didn't consider any other career options in his youth.

The bread guru deftly cuts dough into small sections before rolling them into perfect little batards (like a baguette, but shorter), then presses an already-baked one to listen for that familiar crispy sound, explaining: "You want to hear the music."

A fifth generation baker growing up in the Franche-Comte region, Kayser loved spending time in his father's bakery.

"As soon as I started to speak, I said to my family, 'I want to be a baker and travel'," the red-headed boulanger recalls. Coming from a small village, people thought I was crazy, but I repeated it when I was 10 years old, I repeated it I was 14 years old. And now, I do it."

Kayser opened his first bread shop in Paris in 1996, and these days, he jets around the world to open new bakeries and "bring a love of French bread to people who have never tasted it".

He came to the UK recently to promote his new book, *The Larousse Book Of Bread* (containing more than 80 mouth-watering recipes), and pass on some of his expert tips on creating the perfect brioche, baguette or bagel.

Making bread isn't easy, but with simple equipment and good ingredients ("the most important thing"), something delicious can be created, according to Kayser.

"If you have a small mixer, a good oven and your hands, it will be OK. And a good brain!"

With all that kneading and proofing, however, baking bread from scratch isn't something most people can factor into their busy lives. But giving it a go once a week – or even once a month – is fine, says Kayser.

"You can do your bread or your brioche with your children, with your husband or wife, with your family, and afterwards you can share it," the father-of-two adds.

"I think it's something very religious, because we hear for a long time that we need to share the bread. It's fantastic, it's a good experience and it's good for you to work with your hands."

And if the end result is an underdone or burnt-to-a-crisp disaster? "Patience is very important, and you can start again. All your life you need to be patient. If you want to do something, you need to do it a few times and understand how it will be," he says.

As the smell of freshly-baked bread fills the air, Kayser explains that he views the baker as an alchemist.

"You work with a few ingredients from the ground – flour, water, yeast – to do something beautiful."

And biting into the delicious end result, it's hard to disagree.

■ MASTER BAKER: Eric Kayser is a fifth generation baker

BELINDA DONOVAN

IF you are racing through Bishops Park to get to Putney Bridge underground, instead of walking up the steps onto iconic Putney Bridge, complete with its twinkling historic lights and breathtaking views of the Thames, spare a few minutes to glance into the newly retiled and refurbished Grade II listed Putney Bridge subway and admire the handiwork of local designer Jean Bird.

Or indeed why not head to the underground through the Subway for a change!

Jean is a local illustrator and interior designer and also paints furniture as well as creating theatre sets for a local dramatic group. In fact Jean's feet hardly ever seem to touch the ground.

She was contacted by the Fulham Society and asked to chose tiles to go down the Putney Bridge subway, which is in the process of being completely refurbished by Wandsworth council jointly with the society.

Jean hand-picked the tiles from a shop in Wandsworth together with Maciej from Wandsworth council, who has been hugely supportive.

They comprise a beautiful green leaf 'roof' mosaic to the subway which was originally built 130 years ago. Jean has also chosen tiles depicting tree bark to go up the sides of the subway, taking care that she accommodated the angles of the subway, she tells me.

Special mention should be given to the wonderful tilers, one of whom pulled out of another job at the last minute to focus especially on this superb local project.

The Putney Bridge subway should be finished at the end of March – what a privilege to be able to dash to the tube in the morning through a beautiful newly tiled and renovated Grade II listed subway designed like a glade of trees.

Jean's favourite pudding: easy lemon ice cream

Ingredients: three lemons or two lemons and one lime; 200 g caster sugar; 450 ml double cream; 1/2 tsp salt

Grate the rind of one lemon (some lime too for colour). Squeeze the juice of all three.

Combine the sugar, lemon juice and rind. Add the double cream (no need to whip) and stir well. Freeze in a plastic box. Transfer to the fridge when you begin your meal so that it is softened and easy to serve.

Shaved butternut squash, asparagus and Treviso salad

MARK HIX'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Serves four to six

THIS is a healthy and colourful salad that dovetails with the current trend for raw food. The great thing about it is that it takes just a few minutes to knock up, and looks and tastes really impressive. Our Wye Valley asparagus was extra-extra early this year, which I'm sometime cautious of – but the flavour was fantastic.

For the dressing: 1tbsp cider vinegar; ½ small chilli, finely; hopped; 4tbsp rapeseed oil; salt and freshly ground black pepper; a handful of treviso or other radicchio leaves, washed and dried; 250g butternut squash, thinly shaved with a peeler; 3-4 thick stems of asparagus, shaved lengthways; 100g soft goat's cheese; 1-2tbsp pumpkin seeds, lightly toasted

Whisk all of the ingredients together for the dressing and season to taste. Toss the treviso, squash and asparagus in half of the dressing, season and leave to stand for 5 minutes so the flavours meld. Arrange on individual serving plates or a sharing bowl, then spoon over the rest of the dressing and scatter over the cheese, broken into little nuggets.

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Talk of the town

■ **RECONCILIATION AND CONFRONTATION: Martins Imhangbe (Luce) – pictured above, top – with Mel Giedroyc (Amy) and Nigel Whitmey (Peter) in Luce** Pictures: Ollie King

Parenting in the spotlight

Luce Southwark Playhouse ****

LUCE at the Southwark playhouse is a powerful and hard-hitting drama which fantastically portrays the terror and guilt of being a parent, *writes Nicky Sweetland.*

The play, by JC Lee, stars *British Bake Off's* Mel Giedroyc, who is drawn into her teenage son's world, an adolescent kingdom filled with deceit and deception. The academic high flyer, all-star athlete and generally upstanding citizen, Luce (Martins Imhangbe) has the world at his feet, but everything is not as it seems and after some damaging accusations by a teacher (Natasha Gordon) his true colours begin to be revealed.

An orphaned victim of a foreign war, Luce is taken in by the all-American family and seemingly becomes the model student. The pressures of his past and the imposed expectations weigh heavy on his shoulders however, and with mistrust deepening within the school environment he relies upon absolute unabridged protection from his mother.

With the squeak of trainers on the gym floor as a backdrop, Giedroyc superbly plays the matriarchal hen whose rose tinted glasses are beginning to fragment before her eyes. Allowing some of her affable on-screen persona to filter into the character, she adds a lovable quality to an otherwise quite frightening and formidable beast.

Nigel Whitmey plays the subordinate husband with a real passion as he struggles with his divided loyalties and his less blinkered opinion of their blue eyed boy.

Their ward, Luce is characterised with a steely strength by Imhangbe, who manages to couple charm with a underlying menace. His considerable charisma entwines the audience in his web of aspersions.

The frightening bolstering of Jocks and the tribal nature of teenage boys is made woefully apparent in Lee's writing, but his honest and intricate dialogue also allows Elizabeth Tan's convincing airhead and Natasha Gordon's determined but helpless teacher to find their voice within the confines of the script.

Comical in places but also deeply disturbing, *Luce* wonderfully illustrates a parent's overriding need to protect, no matter what the cost.

■ **PARENTAL PRESSURE: Mel Giedroyc (Amy) in Luce.** Pictures: Ollie King

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Q here for show that's in rude health

Avenue Q
New Wimbledon Theatre ****

THE fabulously rude and downright hilarious musical *Avenue Q* took up residence in Wimbledon last week to near sold-out audiences – and thoroughly thrilled with its grown up puppet play.

The multiple award-winning show is currently on a UK tour and perfectly blends childish humour and a social conscience in a musical which gives some very familiar characters a naughty adult edge.

With some extremely catchy melodies and lyrics which you really shouldn't sing while out in public, the show has a satirical quality and offers some really quite astounding individual performance from the small cast of actors who sing with gusto, dance with energy and all the while have to portray their characters through the fury friend which sits upon their arm.

The story follows Princeton who has recently graduated from college and finds himself without a purpose in life. After taking up residence on Avenue Q he samples some of the delights and pitfalls of adulthood as he tries to find his direction.

Richard Lowe, Sarah Harlington and Stephen Arden take the leading roles as the visible puppeteers, who under the tuition of the Jim Henson studios' master technician Nigel Plaskett expertly convey the characters of the fuzzier residents while maintaining their own rapport with the audiences and human cast members. Jessica Parker, Etisyai Philip, Arina II and Richard Morse provide excellent support and along with a small ensemble of behind-the-scenes puppeteers, make for an exceptional cast who provide an energetic and infinitely amusing array of performers.

If you grew up watching *Sesame Street* you will enjoy the parallels and even if you didn't, this is a wonderfully funny and entertaining show. *Avenue Q* continues its tour around the UK and you can find more details on the website *atgtickets.com*

Talk of the town

BY NICKY SWEETLAND

■ SCREEN STARS: Characters from Disney's *Frozen*, top, and *The Lion King*

Disney's film favourites get their skates on

ALL of your favourite Disney characters are coming to London next month in the show *Disney on Ice presents their Silver Anniversary Celebration*.

The renowned ice show returns to the capital with some of Disney's most beloved characters to once again thrill with a family spectacular which promises to be bigger and better than ever, *writes Nicky Sweetland*.

The commemorative world tour has already visited a wide variety of destinations throughout Europe and next month will take up residence at the SSE Arena, where you will be able to see Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald, Goofy and Daisy on a journey to the timeless worlds of Disney's *The Lion King, The Little Mermaid, Peter Pan*, and the Academy Award winning animated feature film, Disney's *Frozen*.

I caught up with Princess Anna, AKA Jessica Leatham, during the Berlin part of the tour. She told me about what is is like to play an idol to little girls across the globe.

Jessica told me: "The kids are so excited about the whole *Frozen* movie still so it's great to be able to bring them one of their favourite characters from it.

"She's (Anna) very relatable. She has emotions kind of all over the place and, you know, she's excited and then she's sad. I think everyone can relate to those kind of emotions."

The show, which is suitable for the whole family, offers to take you on an exciting adventure as you explore the African pride lands with Simba, Timon and Pumbaa; voyage deep under the sea to Ariel's mystical underwater kingdom; and tour London with Peter Pan and Wendy before flying to Neverland to join Tinker Bell.

Plus, you will travel to Arendelle for an extraordinary adventure with sisters Anna, Elsa, rugged mountain man Kristoff and everyone's favorite huggable snowman, Olaf.

Jessica said: "Apart from the stories that we all know, there's really great skating and a lot of talent. The way the stories are portrayed onto the ice are a really special and unique experience."

With some of the famous Disney music, lovable characters and unforgettable moments, the show at the SSE arena is one not to miss, say its promoters.

Disney On Ice presents Silver Anniversary Celebration is at the SSE Arena from April 13 to 17. If you would like anymore details you can visit the website *disneyonice.co.uk*

■ OFF TO NEVERLAND: Peter Pan and friends

The Only Way is Essex star Ferne McCann is set to make her theatrical debut in *Gatsby* at the Union Theatre. The reality television personality was applauded for her recent appearance on ITV's *I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here* after consuming a large live spider during one of the bush tucker trials. The Towie beauty finished third in the show, which saw *Geordie Shore* star Vicky Pattison take the jungle crown.

McCann, *pictured*, will join the cast of Ruby in the Dust's production of *Gatsby*, which was first performed in 2012 at the King's Head Theatre and again in 2013 at the Riverside Studios. *Gatsby* will run at the Union Theatre from April 6 to 30. For more details visit the website *rubyinthedusttheatre.com*

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Talk of the town

Miss Atomic Bomb ***

It's a blast – but lacks precision to fully hit its target

A BRAND new musical has 'dropped' into the St James theatre and 'split' the opinions of many critics with its original music and pastiche style of story, *writes Nicky Sweetland.*

Miss Atomic Bomb stars comedienne Catherine Tate and is based in the 1950s when testing of nuclear devices was carried out in the Nevada dessert. In a time when the danger of radioactive exposure was unknown, Las Vegas hotels capitalised on the explosive events and a large tourist trade popped up which offered day trips to the blast sites, gala parties on detonation days and even beauty pageants.

The new musical by Adam Long, Gabriel Vick and Alex Jackson-Long, as the title suggests, culminates in one such contest in a hotel which is managed by the lovable but useless Lou, (Simon Lipkin). In order to save the fortunes of the hotel he needs to come up with an atomic bomb gimmick or face the owner's wrath and his probable death.

■ **EXPLOSIVE: Catherine Tate (Myrna Ranapapadophilou) and Simon Lipkin (Lou Lubowitz) in *Miss Atomic Bomb*, St James Theatre** Picture: Tristram Kenton

Lou's brother Joey (Dean John-Wilson), who has recently deserted from the army, comes to the rescue and with some help from a couple of farm girls (Catherine Tate and Florence Andrews) the hotel and Lou's life are saved.

It's always really nice to see new work with original music and this show feels fresh and exciting. There's a lovely blend of Broadway-style old school musical with big tap numbers and high kicks – but at the same time it doesn't feel too old fashioned.

There is, however, an underlying feeling that the show is just not quite ready. Stumbled lines, nervous moments and some slightly wooden performances hamper what could become a great show and the celebrity cast member Catherine Tate is one of the main culprits.

Well known for her comedy turns, I found the trademark repeat of lines annoying and became anxious about the pace of the dialogue whenever Tate was on stage.

■ **SAFE HANDS: Stephane Anelli (Professor Alvin Schmul) and Olivia Fines (Sharon Slatzky) in *Miss Atomic Bomb*, at the St James Theatre** Picture: Tristram Kenton

The other cast members provide good support and her scenes in act two with the hilarious Simon Lipkin are marginally better. Lipkin, on the other hand, really is the star of the show with his perfectly timed slapstick and unabridged charm. His scenes with the scrumptious Dean John-Wilson, who is about to take up the leading role in *Aladdin* at the Prince Edward Theatre, are musical comedy at its best, with tight choreography, funny one-liners and a dash of chivalric honour.

John-Wilson's vocals are like velvet and his duet with Florence Andrews, who delights as a Calamity Jane style Candy, is beautiful.

Andrews' act two standard is the musical highlight of the show however, and her thigh slapping, go getting Candy keeps the momentum rolling along with a real feel of a film musical icon of yesteryear.

The nods to other classic musicals are great fun, in particular Daniel Boys' neurotic Javert impression and the three beauty contestants 'taking off' the strippers from *Gypsy*, but at the same time the parodies feel underdeveloped and a little confused.

Miss Atomic Bomb is a 'blast' and with a little more development I could see the 'fall out' resulting in a full West End transfer – but not until its 'nucleus' has been further developed.

Classified

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Local Planning Applications
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

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PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990
I give notice that applications have been made to the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham as follows:
FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA
58 Cloncurry Street London SW6 6DU 2016/00906/FUL
Installation of three dormer windows on the existing front roof slope to replace existing rooflights; installation of two dormer windows to rear roofslope to replace existing windows; installation of a new window to side elevation at first floor level.
82 Old Oak Common Lane London W3 7DA 2016/01150/FUL
Installation of a new shopfront.
82 Old Oak Common Lane London W3 7DA 2016/01151/ADV
Display of an externally illuminated fascia sign to replace existing; and display of an externally illuminated projecting sign to replace existing.
7 Durrell Road London SW6 5LQ 2016/01154/FUL
Erection of a front roof extension; and erection of a rear extension at second floor level over part of the existing back addition.
Flat Second Floor 28 Bradmore Park Road London W6 0DT 2016/01034/FUL
Erection of a rear roof extension including the installation of French doors and a Juliet balcony; installation of 2no. rooflights in the front roofslope.
62 Petley Road London W6 9ST 2016/01202/FUL
Erection of a rear roof extension involving an increase in the ridge height by 150 mm; installation of 3 no. rooflights in the front roofslope; and erection of a rear extension at second floor level over part of the existing back addition.
61 Hestercombe Avenue London SW6 5LL 2016/01269/FUL
Erection of a rear extension at second floor level over part of the existing back addition; installation of French doors and a Juliet balcony in the rear roofslope; excavation of the front and rear garden to form lightwells in connection with the enlargement of the existing basement.
137 - 139 King Street London W6 9JG 2016/01278/VAR
Variation of condition 2 of planning permission ref: 2014/06126/FUL granted 5th May 2015 to allow the installation of 1no obscure glazed window to the eastern and western elevation of the building.
69 Sulgrave Road London W6 7QH 2016/01281/FUL
Erection of a rear roof extension involving an increase in the ridge height; installation of 3no rooflights in the front roofslope; re-building of single storey rear extension; excavation of the front garden to form a lightwell in connection with the creation of a new lightwell.
181 - 187 King Street Town Hall Extension Town Hall Frontage And Land West Of Nigel Playfair Avenue (West) London W6 2016/00619/VAR
Application for minor material amendments to planning permission (Ref.2013/03091/FUL) dated 17 July 2014, which is for the demolition and partial demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment and refurbishment to provide civic offices, 196 residential dwellings, a cinema, shops, restaurants and bars, within Use Classes B1, C3, D2, A1, A3 and A4, together with civic square and other public realm works, landscaping, car parking (including basement car parking), servicing, access and related development. The minor material amendments proposed are as follows: variation of Condition 2 to allow for changes to the approved drawings (to accommodate design changes to the first phase of development on the land west of Nigel Playfair Avenue); variation to the wording of condition 18 (archaeological investigation) to allow demolition above ground level; variation of the wording of Condition 24 (to reflect the latest standards); deletion of Condition 51 (on the grounds that the Code for Sustainable Homes has since been abolished).

Flat Ground Floor 39 Iffley Road London W6 0PB 2015/06007/FUL
Erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side of the existing back addition; installation of French doors with additional side panels in the rear elevation at ground floor level; alterations to window in rear elevation at ground floor level (Amended Description).
17 Admiral Court Admiral Square Chelsea Harbour London SW10 0UU 2016/00878/FUL
Erection of a single storey side infill rear extension at fourth floor level.
Former BBC Television Centre Wood Lane London W12 2016/01152/FUL
Use of the roof of the Multi-storey Car Park for a rooftop restaurant event (Wednesday to Friday 18:00 to 23:00, Saturday 12 noon to 23:00, Sunday 12 noon to 21:30) for a temporary period of up to 14 weeks from 25 May 2016 to 29 August 2016, including the erection of a timber pergola covering seating area.
35 - 37 Uxbridge Road London W12 8LH 2016/01048/FUL
Change of use of the first floor from residential (Class C3) into an office/storage area ancillary the ground floor retail shop (Class A1); erection of a rear extension at first floor level over part of the existing back addition; installation of new rooflights and roof glazing to the side of first floor rear back addition; alterations to the external fenestration at first floor level.
24 Turneville Road London W14 9PS 2016/01049/FUL
Erection of a front and rear roof extension; erection of a rear extension at first floor level, on top of the existing back addition.
5 Beaconsfield Terrace Road London W14 0PP 2016/01192/FUL
Conversion of the first, second and third floor levels into 2 x one bedroom and 1 x two bedroom self-contained flats.
Imperial Wharf Marina Townmead Road London 2016/01183/FUL
The construction of new moorings at Imperial Wharf, pontoon will measure 270m long x 2m wide and located parallel to the existing marina. The extension will add another 540m of additional berthing length to the marina. The pontoon will be serviced by the existing walkway with a linkspan/pontoon between the existing and proposed pontoons.
Walham House Walham Grove London SW6 1JA 2016/01223/FUL
Erection of a front and rear roof extension involving an increase in the ridge height; erection of two storey extension to the side of the main building; further excavation and enlargement of the existing basement including the formation of an additional lightwell
271 Goldhawk Road London W12 8EU 2016/01237/FUL
Replacement of existing timber boundary fence with new brick boundary wall, metal railings on top of the boundary wall, brick piers and entrance gates to replace the existing at the front elevation; installation of metal railings on top of the existing brick boundary wall and increasing the height of the existing brick piers to the front elevation; formation of a new ramp to the front elevation.
85 - 87 Waterford Road London SW6 2ET 2016/01198/VAR
Removal of condition 5 (drainage strategy) of planning permission ref: 2015/05030/FUL granted 17th February 2016.
132 Munster Road London SW6 5RD 2016/01205/FUL
Conversion of a single family dwelling house into 3no. self-contained flats (1no. three bedroom, 1no. two bedroom and 1no. one bedroom); and erection of a bin store and a bike store in the front garden.
1 Queen Caroline Street London W6 9HQ 2016/01291/FUL
Erection of five condenser units at roof level; erection of a satellite dish at roof level.
Craven Cottage Stevenage Road London SW6 6HH 2016/01285/FUL
Repair and refurbishment of the Cottage Gates and associated piers and installation of new light fittings to top of main piers.

44 Micklethwaite Road London SW6 1QD 2016/01254/FUL
Excavation of front garden and part of rear garden to form lightwells, in connection with the creation of the basement.
Flat Ground Floor 39 Iffley Road London W6 0PB 2016/00938/FUL
Erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side of the existing back addition; excavation of the basement.
White City One Media Village Wood Lane London W12 2016/00420/FUL
Change of use of 2,022m2 Use Class B1 (Business) at ground floor, to: 1,898m2 Use Class A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), and 124m2 of flexible Class A1 (Shops) and/or B1 (Business) use; external alterations along the northern, southern, western and eastern elevations at ground floor to create new shopfronts; alterations to the corner glazing at fourth and fifth floor level; alterations to the northern, western and southern facing elevations of the inner courtyard, alterations to louvres at roof level and associated works.
White City One Media Village Wood Lane London W12 2015/05922/FUL
Erection of a four storey extension at the south façade and erection of single storey extensions at ground, fourth and fifth floor levels within the internal courtyard including creation of additional floor area within existing circulation areas at ground, first and second floor levels and installation of new lift enclosure along southern elevation of internal courtyard between ground and sixth floor levels to facilitate change of use of parts of the ground floor to provide: 567m2 GIA flexible Class A1 and/or A3 and/or D2 floorspace, and; 230m2 GIA flexible Class A1 and/or A3 and/or B1 floorspace plus an additional 1,767m2 GIA Class B1 floorspace; erection of a 74m2 GIA Class A1 and/or A3 kiosk at first floor podium level within the internal courtyard; external alterations and associated works.
FOR CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT (DEMOLITION WORK)
FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
Craven Cottage Stevenage Road London SW6 6HH 2016/01286/LBC
Repair and refurbishment of the Cottage Gates and associated piers and installation of new light fittings to top of main piers.
FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY AFFECT THE SETTING OR CONTEXT OF A LISTED BUILDING
181 - 187 King Street Town Hall Extension Town Hall Frontage And Land West Of Nigel Playfair Avenue (West) London W6 2016/00619/VAR
Application for minor material amendments to planning permission (Ref.2013/03091/FUL) dated 17 July 2014, which is for the demolition and partial demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment and refurbishment to provide civic offices, 196 residential dwellings, a cinema, shops, restaurants and bars, within Use Classes B1, C3, D2, A1, A3 and A4, together with civic square and other public realm works, landscaping, car parking (including basement car parking), servicing, access and related development. The minor material amendments proposed are as follows: variation of Condition 2 to allow for changes to the approved drawings (to accommodate design changes to the first phase of development on the land west of Nigel Playfair Avenue); variation to the wording of condition 18 (archaeological investigation) to allow demolition above ground level; variation of the wording of Condition 24 (to reflect the latest standards); deletion of Condition 51 (on the grounds that the Code for Sustainable Homes has since been abolished).
Flat Ground Floor 39 Iffley Road London W6 0PB 2015/06007/FUL
Erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side of the existing back addition; installation of French doors with additional side panels in the rear elevation at ground floor level; alterations to window in rear elevation at ground floor level (Amended Description).

Flat A 34 Ellingham Road London W12 9PR 2016/01190/FUL
Installation of a new door to replace the existing window and the erection of obscure glass balustrades around the flat roof at second floor level to the rear elevation, in connection with its use as a terrace.
5 Beaconsfield Terrace Road London W14 0PP 2016/01192/FUL
Conversion of the first, second and third floor levels into 2 x one bedroom and 1 x two bedroom self-contained flats.
Walham House Walham Grove London SW6 1JA 2016/01223/FUL
Erection of a front and rear roof extension involving an increase in the ridge height; erection of two storey extension to the side of the main building; further excavation and enlargement of the existing basement including the formation of an additional lightwell
90 Hadyn Park Road London W12 9AG 2016/01232/FUL
Removal of shopfront and alterations to front elevation at ground floor level consisting of new windows and door.
Craven Cottage Stevenage Road London SW6 6HH 2016/01285/FUL
Repair and refurbishment of the Cottage Gates and associated piers and installation of new light fittings to top of main piers.
Flat Ground Floor 39 Iffley Road London W6 0PB 2016/00938/FUL
Erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side of the existing back addition; excavation of the basement.
Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications should do so by **17th April 2016**. See below for ways of commenting on applications.
THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 2013
NOTICES UNDER REGULATION 13
Garage To The Rear Of 168 Stephendale Road London SW6 2PN 2015/05256/FUL
I give notice that Ms Jenny Supant is applying to HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL for planning permission to carry out the following development: Excavation under the footprint of the garage to form a new basement with lightwells, in connection with the conversion of the ground and basement level of the garage into a single family dwellinghouse; installation of new entrance gates and timber privacy panelling fronting Lindrop Street elevation; alterations to the fenestration at ground floor level.
Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications should do so by **17th April 2016**. See below for ways of commenting on applications.
Signed: **NIGEL PALLACE**
Executive Director for Transport and Technical Services
on behalf of HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL
You can view applications, make comments and monitor their progress on our website: www.lbhf.gov.uk/planning. Click on the 'Planning Online' logo on the Planning Home Page.
You can also E-mail comments to: plancomments@lbhf.gov.uk
You can also inspect details of applications using computers at our office **RECEPTION FIRST FLOOR HAMMERSMITH TOWN HALL EXTENSION KING STREET W6** between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.
If you want to make comments on applications please E-mail them through our website or post them to **DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE ENVIRONMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT TOWN HALL KING STREET W6 9JU** by the date shown above. Please include the application reference number and the name of the planning officer. We will try to consider any representations received after the date indicated but this cannot be guaranteed so please reply promptly. For initial enquiries call our information and reception service on **020 8753 1081** or **020 8753 1082**.

lbhf.gov.uk/planning Online
Send us your comments about planning applications via our website: **www.lbhf.gov.uk/planning**

Hammersmith & Fulham Council

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TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 13 - TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015
Proposed Development at: The Clearings, Draycott Avenue, London SW3 2NA

Take notice that an application is being made by: McGrove Developments Ltd For planning permission for: "Demolition of Clearings 1, Leverett Street and Denyer Street depot (collectively known as the Clearings site) and redevelopment to provide 78 residential units, with ancillary facilities for residents, basement car parking, landscaping and walkways between Mossop Street and Denyer Street, Class A1 and Class A1/D2 floorspace at ground floor and Class D2 floorspace at basement levels 1 and 2."
Any owner* of the land or tenant** who wishes to make representations about this application should write to the Council at Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Department of Planning and Borough Development, Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8 7NX within 21 days beginning with the date of publication of this notice.
Date: 24th March 2016

Signed: DP9 Ltd
On behalf of: McGrove Developments Ltd

*"owner" means a person having a freehold interest or a leasehold interest the unexpired term of which is not less than seven years, or, in the case of development consisting of the winning or working of minerals, a person entitled to an interest in a mineral in the land (other than oil, gas, coal, gold or silver).
**"tenant" means a tenant of an agricultural holding any part of which is comprised in the land.
Statement of owner's rights The grant of planning permission does not affect owner's rights to retain or dispose of their property, unless there is some provision to the contrary in an agreement or in a lease. Statement of agricultural tenant's rights The grant of planning permission for non-agricultural development may affect agricultural tenant's security of tenure.

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LICENSING ACT 2003
NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR VARIATION OF PREMISES LICENCE

NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT Skarb Limited has applied to Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea on 21 March 2016 to vary the premises licence at World's End Market, 459 Kings Road, London, SW10 0LR so as to 1) extend the permitted hours in the basement for the sale of alcohol, live music and the provision of late night refreshment by one hour on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings to 02:00. 2) To extend the permitted hours on the first floor for the sale of alcohol and provision of late night refreshment by one hour on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings to 01:00 and to permit the showing of films from 11:00 to 00:00 Monday to Sunday, as more particularly set out in the application

Any person who wishes to make a representation in relation to this application must give notice in writing to: **Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Licensing Authority, 37 Pembroke Road, London, W8 6PW** to be received by no later than 18 April 2016 stating the grounds for making said representation.

A record of the application can be inspected on the Council's website www.rbkc.gov.uk or at the above address during office hours. The register can be viewed at the above address during office hours.

It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in or in connection with an application for a premises licence and the maximum fine on being convicted of such an offence is £5,000.

Thomas & Thomas Partners LLP
38a Monmouth Street, London WC2H 9EP www.tandtp.com

KATHLEEN HARGREAVES
(Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 60 Campbell Court, Queen's Gate Gardens, London SW7 4PD, who died on 01/03/2016, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 06/06/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

Coutts & Co, 6th Floor, Trinity Quay 2, Avon Street, Bristol BS2 0PT.
Ref: 1/SW/66250818

CATHERYN BERESZNICKI
(Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 12 Caversham Street, London SW3 4AH, who died on 02/02/2016, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 06/06/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

Coutts & Co, 6th Floor, Trinity Quay 2, Avon Street, Bristol BS2 0PT.
Ref: 1/SW/66250283

GEORGE LAURENCE HARBOTTLE
(Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 7b Cresswell Place, London SW10 9RD, who died on 01/05/2015, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 06/06/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

Harbottle & Lewis, Hanover House, 14 Hanover Square, London W1S 1HP.
Ref: 442/316315/1

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Rangers urge fans to support stadium bid

WITHOUT a game for almost two weeks, Queens Park Rangers have turned their attention to an important off the field issue by urging their supporters to show their backing for the planned new stadium at Old Oak Common, which – in their words – will "secure QPR's future and benefit west London."

QPR unveiled plans for a 40,000-capacity stadium in December 2013. R's Chairman Tony Fernandes said: "Loftus Road is – and always will be – a special place for the club and our supporters, but we need more than an 18,000 capacity."

If, and when, Rangers make it back to the Premier League, the club will need to generate much more income in addition to TV money and gate receipts if it is to maintain a place at football's top table. Their current stadium in Shepherd's Bush can accommodate only 450 hospitality guests.

The club wants their new stadium – titled New Queens Park – to be at the heart of the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation's (OPDC) regeneration scheme that is projected to create 25,500 new homes and 65,000 jobs.

Mayor of London Boris Johnson, who set up the OPDC to oversee this regeneration programme, has launched the next phase of consultation on Old Oak, issuing a document known as the 'Local Plan' – the rules by which all planning applications are decided. The document is only a draft and calls on people, particularly west London residents, to comment so they can help shape the plans for their area.

Benefit the area

The draft Local Plan calls for small to large-scale 'catalysts' that could act as a focus of early development, which could include 'culture, sport, leisure uses, education and health institutions'.

QPR have a plan to deliver a new stadium, with educational, sporting and community facilities to benefit people in the area. The club shares the Mayor's vision for Old Oak to become a vibrant place where people live, work and play, and return to time and time again.

A new multifunctional stadium – a sports and entertainment hub that is used all year round – would drive the timescale to support the early delivery of homes, and the restaurants, shops and bars within it would bring jobs and opportunities to the area. It would also provide a proper base for the QPR in the Community Trust, allowing it to increase its highly regarded community outreach activity.

At a recent fans' forum reported on by the respected Loft For Words website, Rangers' CEO Lee Hoos said he was very encouraged by what's happening with the new stadium despite a recent letter sent out to some QPR groups from Car Giant reiterating their position that there would never be a stadium at Old Oak Common.

"We have a mayoral election in May, the two principal candidates fully support our bid for a stadium in west London. They're impressed with our community work, they accept we need a new stadium," says Hoos.

"It takes me nowhere to get into a war of words with Car Giant and I respect Geoff Warren as a guy who cleared obstacles out of his way to build a good business. It's a big piece of land, we don't own all of it, he doesn't own all of it – he owns more than we do. One thing I have learnt is that the person who owns the land doesn't always have the say, alone, in what actually happens. Car Giant put through a master plan that included a museum – the beauty of English property law is they've said we're trying to put a stadium on land that isn't ours but that museum is planned on land that isn't theirs.

"There's a lot of interested parties in this – the council, the OPDC, the GLA, the mayor and we don't even know who the next mayor will be. If I was coming in at the beginning of a mayoral term I'd have handled this differently, but there is absolutely positively going to be a new mayor and we don't know how the landscape will change.

"In an ideal world we'd wait to see who the new mayor is, but the consultation period ends on March 31, so if anybody hasn't seen it, please, I urge everybody to respond to that consultation. We need to keep ourselves front of mind with that organisation. What I don't want to do is play our strategy in the public arena – I'm being as transparent as I can without shooting myself in the foot.

"We need this stadium to survive. There are so many issues here – atmosphere and close to the pitch is great, but it's expensive to run, we only have 450 people in hospitality.

"The club has been in administration once, was on the verge of admin again when Mr Briatore bought it. I don't want to rely on ownership writing out a cheque every month to keep it going. However much money you have, you soon get bored of that, as we've seen at Bolton. That's not me in any way saying the owners want out, I just want this to be a sustainable club.

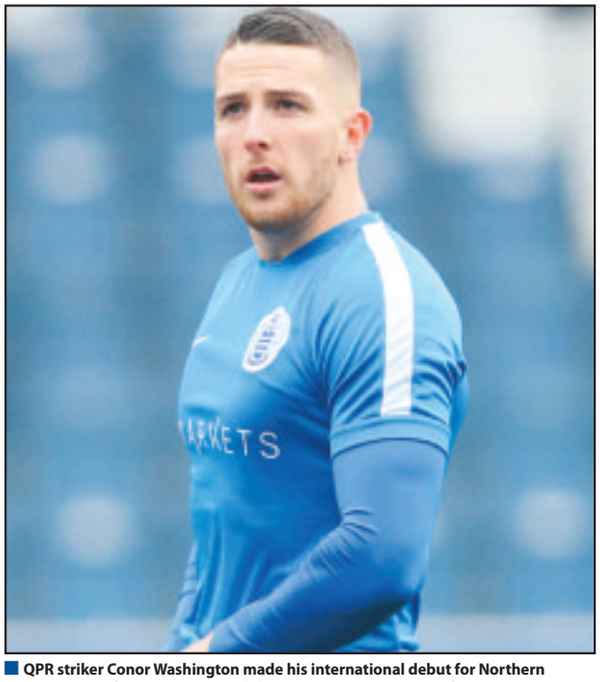
"In terms of the ownership of the new stadium, we'll go with the structure that's the most tax efficient. Quite a few clubs I've been with have a holding company that's a property company that owns the stadium, it's the most tax efficient way to do it."

Back in the present, R's return to action at Loftus Road on Friday night against promotion-chasing Middlesbrough.

LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW
With Tony McDonald

An official statement issued by QPR last week said: "If you want to ensure the long-term sustainability of QPR, then please download and complete the form on our website at **www.qpr.co.uk** to tell the decision makers that a new stadium should specifically be included in the plans. The voice of every R's fan will count, and having your say couldn't be easier.

"Alternatively, if you want to comment in more detail on the mayor's vision for Old Oak, you can visit the Local Plan website at **www.opdccommonplace.is/** or email the OPDC at **localplan@opdc.london.gov.uk**. It is important to include your home address so they can contact you afterwards."



QPR striker Conor Washington made his international debut for Northern Ireland as a half-time sub in their 1-1 draw with Wales in Cardiff last week Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Friday, April 1
QPR v Middlesbrough, 7.45
Saturday, April 2
Aston Villa v CHELSEA, 12.45
FULHAM v Milton Keynes Dons, 3.00
Tuesday, April 5
Leeds United v QPR, 7.45
Preston North End v FULHAM, 7.45

KIT Symons had a better record than his replacement

Fulham faring worse than under Symons

FULHAM from back page

This is how the three management periods this season compare:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Symons	16	5	5	6	29	28	20
Interims	8	1	4	3	11	14	7
Jokanović	14	2	5	7	17	22	11

While these figures don't make great reading for Jokanović, most Fulham fans are still prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt. They point out that he inherited a poor team when he took over, was given no money by the board to spend in the January transfer window and his proven track record at Watford, whom he led to promotion to the Premier League less than a year ago, lends added weight to the belief that he will eventually get it right at Craven Cottage, especially after a full pre-season under his regime.

Of course, it might be unwise to assume Jokanović will want to stay beyond this season to try and turn things around. Relegation would almost certainly result in his departure by mutual consent.

Who goes down

Realistically, it's between Fulham, MK Dons and Rotherham United as to who goes down with Charlton and Bolton to the third division next season. But while the gap between Rotherham and Fulham is only a point, the rejuvenated Millers have been showing promotion form under caretaker boss Neil Warnock, winning four and drawing one of their last five.

MK Dons host Rotherham on Saturday week in what could be another decisive encounter.

Let's look at the remaining fixtures for the three teams in the thick of the dog-fight (current league position in brackets). On paper, Fulham have the toughest run-in, facing three teams currently in the top 10:

FULHAM (21st, 38 points)
April 2 H MK Dons (22)
April 5 A Preston (10)
April 9 H Cardiff City (7)
April 15 A Brighton & H.A. (2)
April 23 H Nottm Forest (15)
April 30 A Brentford (18)
May 7 H Bolton (24)

MK DONS (22nd, 37 points)
April 2 A Fulham (21)
April 5 H Wolves (12)
April 9 H Rotherham (20)
April 16 A Preston (10)
April 19 A Sheff Wed (6)
April 23 H Brentford (18)
April 30 A Ipswich Town (8)
May 7 H Nottm Forest (15)

ROTHERHAM (20th, 39 points)
April 2 H Leeds Utd (13)
April 5 A Bristol City (19)
April 9 A MK Dons (22)
April 16 H Nottm Forest (15)
April 19 H Huddersfield (16)
April 23 A Wolves (12)
April 30 H Blackburn Rovers (14)
May 7 A Hull City (4)

Rampaul joins Surrey

SURREY have announced the signing of former West Indian seamer Ravi Rampaul on a two-year deal.

Rampaul, 31, has played 18 Test matches, 92 ODIs and 23 T20 internationals.

Rampaul is effectively replacing paceman Jade Dernbach, who will miss at least the first couple of months of the season due to a back injury.

Rain on the third day of last week's pre-season friendly between local rivals Surrey and Middlesex at The Kia Oval forced the opening match to be abandoned. Surrey scored 250 for 9 declared in their first innings, with Joe Burke top-scoring on 62.

Nick Gubbins, Nick Compton and not out batsman Paul Stirling all reached 60-plus as Middlesex notched 263 for 3 in reply to take a narrow first innings lead.

Surrey declared their second innings on 143 for 2 – Arun Harinath was 66 not out – but poor weather denied the visitors a second knock.

London Weekly News

SPORT

Tuesday, March 29th, 2016 ● SPORTS DESK: 07711 169 427

■ PRIZE CATCH: Barcelona are eyeing up a bid for Thibaut Courtois Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

Barca keen on Chelsea keeper

● By LWN reporter **Paul Lagan**
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THIBAUT Courtois' time at Chelsea could be coming to an abrupt end as Barcelona sniff around the talented Belgium goalkeeper.

Courtois has had an indifferent season at Stamford Bridge after winning his battle to oust popular Petr Cech, who opted to join Arsenal this season.

An injury in December did not help, but sounds coming from the Belgium camp, where Courtois has been on international duty, suggest that the keeper is desperate to play Champions League football next season, and he clearly won't be doing that in SW6.

Barcelona will be on the lookout for another stopper, because Liverpool are set to bid for their out of favour German goalie Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

Chelsea will look to get £75million for the 23-year-old.

Courtois signed for Chelsea in January 2011 for £5.5m from Genk. He was then loaned out to Atletico Madrid until the end of 2013-14 season.

Adding up all the loan fees paid to Chelsea by the Spanish club, it works out that they got Courtois for absolutely nothing, which is excellent business.

He has recently been quoted on a possible move away from Stamford Bridge in the summer: "I do not say 'yes', I do not say 'no'. I do not know. I still have three years on my contract. We must see what Chelsea want."

Currently 10th in the Premier League table, Blues will need more than the £25m they got for selling Ramires to China to rebuild their failing squad.

Stamping his authority

Courtois will be seen as expendable by incoming boss Antonio Conte, who is already stamping his authority in regard to transfer targets.

With director of football Michael Emenalo's position as transfer pawnbroker looking increasingly precarious, Conte's insistence that Chelsea abandon their long and so far embarrassing failure to land English defender John Stones from Everton only adds to speculation that Nigerian Emenalo may not see out another season at Stamford Bridge.

Italian boss Conte, who leaves his post after the Euro finals in the summer, would prefer the stability of an experienced centre-back to replace outgoing John Terry. Italian Leonardo Bonucci, who plays for Conte's former club Juventus, is the man he wants.

It would make financial sense, too, as Bonucci, 28, will cost £25m – half the valuation of Stones.

The Italian revolution at Chelsea could also see the introduction of Roma's Belgium Radia Nainggolan.

The all-action midfielder is viewed as the man to pep up Blues' one-paced – and that's slow – midfield.

Chelsea would want to finance the £30m deal with the cash received from selling Nemanja Matic or, most likely, Eden Hazard who, like Courtois, is desperate for Champions League football and a dream move to Real Madrid.

Interim boss Guus Hiddink returned from playing golf this week to start preparations for the visit to Villa Park to face relegation-haunted Aston Villa in the early afternoon kick-off this Saturday.

This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

LWN Sport went to press ahead of this week's second round of international matches and he will be hoping to have an injury-free squad to choose from.

Certainly Chelsea vice-captain Gary Cahill should be in buoyant mood having led England to an impressive 3-2 victory over Germany in Berlin on Saturday.

With Diego Costa sitting out Spain's matches, he is fully expected to resume the striking role after serving a one-match ban against West Ham, having been sent off against Everton in the FA Cup defeat the previous week.

Costa's fellow striker Bertrand Traore played in Burkina Faso's 1-0 win over Uganda in an Africa Cup of Nations qualifier.

Chelsea's three available amigos were in the Spain squad for their 1-1 draw with Italy. Cesar Azpilicueta played at left-back, Cesc Fabregas in a more advance midfield role, while Pedro was on the bench.

Goalkeeper Asmir Begovic, who will be hoping to benefit from the sale of Courtois, notched up his 48th cap for Bosnia as they overcame Luxembourg 3-0.

Loanee Andreas Christensen started for Denmark for the first time in a 2-1 win over Iceland.

Another senior loanee, Juan Cuadrado, played in a World Cup qualifier for Colombia against Bolivia. The speedy winger's side won 3-2.

World Cup action

Also in World Cup action was Chelsea player of the season – so far – Willian, who earned his 33rd Brazil cap in a 2-2 draw against Uruguay, although Oscar stayed on the bench.

Almost a forgotten man, centre-back Michael Hector, who was signed from Reading but loaned back to the Berkshire side, played for Jamaica in a 1-1 home draw with Costa Rica.

The club has also been well represented below senior level. England U21s had Lewis Baker, Ruben Loftus-Cheek, John Swift and Dominic Solanke in action in a 1-1 draw against Switzerland in their European Championship qualifying group.

Izzy Brown and ex-Pimlico Academy student Tammy Abraham played for the U19s in a 1-1 draw against Greece.

Trevoh Chalobah skippered the U17s, while Jamie Cumming, Dujon Sterling and Mason Mount also played in the 1-0 win over Finland.

■ **CHELSEA have been quick to organise some top class pre-season friendlies for next season. Once again they will be heading Stateside – this time to Michigan Stadium on July 30, when they will play Real Madrid.**

Blues will face Liverpool three days earlier in Pasadena's Rose Bowl Stadium and on August 3 they will meet AC Milan at the US Bank Stadium.

Focus on Craven Cottage

By TONY McDONALD

Whites' date with destiny

IT is impossible to exaggerate the importance of Fulham's home match against Milton Keynes Dons on Saturday.

Even though there are eight games left to play this season, defeat for either side will probably condemn them to relegation from the Championship. It would certainly leave them floundering in the bottom three.

MK Dons are already peering through the trap door into League One, just above Charlton Athletic and Bolton Wanderers and only a point behind fourth-from-bottom Fulham.

This Craven Cottage showdown – 21st v 22nd – is the definitive 'six-pointer', a game neither team dare lose, although a draw would suit the visitors a little more than Whites.

In previewing this vital encounter, there is little by way of form to go on. Fulham are without a win in their last six; MK Dons have managed only one in the same period. The west Londoners share the worst home league record – 20 points from 19 games – with Charlton; MK have the third poorest away record in the second tier – two wins and seven draws from 19.

Both teams go into the game having not played competitively for a fortnight.

But it's not as if Fulham head coach Slaviša Jokanović has been able to use that extra respite to do much tactical work on the training ground. Several of his squad have been scattered to all points of Europe and beyond.

Defenders the key

Ross McCormack claimed an assist in Scotland's 1-0 win against the Czech Republic in Prague last Thursday; fellow striker Moussa Dembélé featured in France Under-20s' 2-0 win over the Czech Republic, while Emerson Hyndman is returning from South America after playing the full 90 minutes for USA Under-23s in their 1-1 draw away to Colombia.

At least Jokanović should have been able to make use of invaluable time with his defenders, who will be key to Fulham's hopes of surviving this relegation scrap. The most damning statistic is that Fulham have managed to keep a clean sheet in just three league matches out of 38 this season.

The Serbian coach has so far been unable to solve a problem that plagued his predecessor Kit Symons throughout his 13-month tenure. In 14 games since Jokanović took charge in SW6 at the start of the year, Whites have prevented only one team from scoring against them – second-bottom Charlton in a 3-0 win at The Cottage on February 20 – and recorded a meagre two victories.

The general consensus among fretting Fulham followers is that the team appear to be more resolute and organised under Jokanović, but the facts don't support this viewpoint. Whites have lost one more league match – seven compared to six – than they did in the first 16 fixtures of the season with the much-maligned Symons in the dug-out.

Under Symons, Fulham had a better goal difference before he was sacked on November 8 than during the subsequent gloomy eight-match winter stop-gap of interim coaches, Peter Grant and Stuart Gray, and now under Jokanović. When Symons was fired by owner Shahid Khan, Whites were the Championship's leading scorers, safely cocooned in mid-table, eight points off the play-off places. Dizzy heights!

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